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OF THE
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OF
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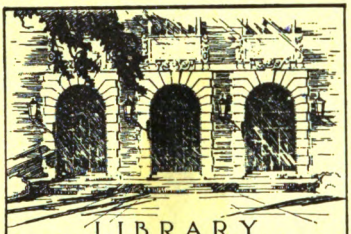
SOUTHWORTH



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THE LADY OF THE ISLE;

OR,

THE ISLAND PRINCESS.

BY

MRS. EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

AUTHOR OF "MIRIAM, THE AVENGER; OR, THE MISSING BRIDE," "A BEAUTIFUL FIEND," "HOW HE WON HER," "RETRIBUTION," "CHANGED BRIDES," "TRIED FOR HER LIFE," "BRIDE'S FATE," "WIDOW'S SON," "A NOBLE LORD," "CRUEL AS THE GRAVE," "FORTUNE SEEKER," "ALLWORTH ABBEY," "LOST HEIRESS," "FAMILY DOOM," "THE ARTIST'S LOVE," "GIPSY'S PROPHECY," "HAUNTED HOMESTEAD," "FALLEN PRIDE," "VICTOR'S TRIUMPH," "THE CURSE OF CLIFTON," "THE SPECTRE LOVER," "MAIDEN WIDOW," "TWO SISTERS," "BRIDAL EVE," "FAIR PLAY," "THE FATAL MARRIAGE," "PRINCE OF DARKNESS," "BRIDE OF LLEWELLYN," "MOTHER-IN-LAW," "DESERTED WIFE," "INDIA," "DISCARDED DAUGHTER," "WIFE'S VICTORY," "LOVE'S LABOR WON," "THREE BEAUTIES," "THE CHRISTMAS GUEST," "VIVIA," "LOST HEIR OF LINLITHGOW," ETC.

"*'Tis strange, but true; for truth is always strange,*
Stranger than fiction. If it could be told,
How much would fiction gain by the exchange!
How differently the world would men behold!"—BYRON.

"*With caution judge of probability,*
Things deemed unlikely, e'en impossible,
Experience oft hath proven to be true."—SHAKSPEARE.

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THE WIFE'S VICTORY. *THE FATAL SECRET.*
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THE ARTIST'S LOVE. *LOVE'S LABOR WON.*
MYSTERY OF DARK HOLLOW. *RETRIBUTION.*

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A WORD TO THE READER.

In offering you this, the most singular romance that I have ever written, I feel constrained to say, that the most remarkable characters and incidents here exhibited, are drawn from well-known persons and events of real life. These circumstances are here presented with only such judicious change of times, places, and proper names, as is dictated by the prudence and delicacy which also withholds me from pointing out more definitely the sources whence they were derived.

E. D. E. N. S.

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THE

LADY OF THE ISLE.

CHAPTER I.

AN INTERRUPTED WEDDING.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, that but an hour before
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness!
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs,
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet, such awful morn could rise!—*Byron.*

It was the first of May, the marriage day of the Viscount Montressor, of Montressor Castle, Dorsetshire, and Estelle, only daughter and heiress of Sir Parke Morelle, Hyde Hall, Devonshire.

A glorious morning! the cloudless, blue sky smiled down upon the green hills and dewy dales and deep woods of Devon; and the park around the Hall was all alive and musical with the joyous songs of birds, and the merry laughter of young men and maidens gathering to celebrate their May-day festival, and to do honor to the marriage of their landlord's daughter.

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The elm-shaded, winding avenue that led from the highway to the house, was arched at each terminus by a mammoth wreath of flowers, and many were the carriages that passed under them, on their way to assist at the wedding; and these contained only the bridesmaids, and the nearest friends and relatives of the family, whose relationship or position gave them the right to attend the bride to church; —for a still more numerous party had been invited to meet her at the altar. The villagers and tenants, grouped about under the shade of the great old trees, or wandering over the greensward on either side of the grand avenue, watched these equipages as they rolled on, commenting—as usual—

"That is Sir William Welworth's carriage—he is the bride's uncle by her mother."

"Who don't know that?—Hush! my eyes! lend me a rumberrell, Joe, or I shall be dazed blind, along o' looking at this turn out! Whose is it? since you know everything."

"That?—that's Lord Dazzleright's—the great cove's as made a fortin' and *riz by the law*—(not at a rope's end, though, as *you'll* rise one of these days, Bill, my lad, if you don't keep out o' the squire's preserves)—but by reading and pleading, and keeping on the right, do you see, of the powers that be; until he got himself made a Baron of;—which people *do* say he'll get upon the woolsack yet," replied the gamekeeper, Joe, as the splendid equipage of the new member of the house of peers dashed past them.

"Yes; but what does he *he* do here?" inquired the laborer, Bill.

"He's the god-father of the bride, you know, besides being a bachelor without children, I mean sons-and-heirs."

"Here comes somethin' like a huss—my granny! how solemncolly! who's comin' to a funeral?"

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"Oh let me see!—*that?* why that's the carriage of the old Duchess of Graveminster, the grand-aunt of Lady Morelle, She was expected at the hall yesterday; something must o' stopped her," said Joe, as a large, sombre, dark-colored traveling carriage lumbered heavily past.

"What o'clock is it, Mr. Joe? your a weatherwise, and you can tell," inquired a young girl leaving a group of maidens and joining the two men.

"What o'clock, my dear?" replied the game-keeper, looking up at the sun with an air of confidence. "Well, I should say it was just about a quarter to ten."

"Oh—dear me! and the weddingers won't pass till nearly twelve! and here we are to wait two mortal hours! and I want to be away at the Maypole so much."

"Hush! my darling; look! here comes his lordship's carriage, itself, just as sure as you're the prettiest lass in the country," whispered the gamekeeper, as a very plain but handsome traveling carriage of dark green, drawn by a pair of spirited grey horses, rolled on up the avenue toward the Hall.

"*Whose* Lordship's? What are you thinking about, Mr Joseph?" asked the little maiden, fretfully.

"Why, *his* Lordship's! *The* Lorship's—the *only* Lordship to be thought about now, my dear! Lord *Montressor's* Lordship!"

"Now *that's* impossible, Mr. Joseph! If you *be* game-keeper, you sha'n't make game of *me*, at that rate. Lord Montressor! Marry-come-up! What should *he*, of all men, be doing here at *this*, of all hours?"

"Come up to marry, I suppose. Anyhow it is *he*."

"Nonsense! It can't *be*, I tell you! It would be out of all manners! Don't I know? He's to bring all his groomsmen, and *his* friends and relations to the *church*, and wait *there* for Miss Morelle and her friends and relations! *That's* manners."

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"I know it be!"

"That shows it can't be Lord Montressor who drove past just now."

"But I know *it be him*, also! Don't I know his Lordship's grey and crimson liveries? and his co't arms—the lion *couchant*, and the lady *sittin on't*? It's *him*, now just as sure as you are just the sweetest creetur in the world; but what I be thinking of is—*what's to pay*? It looks like somethin' was *on*regular!"

"Onreglar? I believe you! Who ever heard of such a thing?—if it *be* Lord Montressor."

It was Lord Montressor.

Early that morning a note from his affianced bride had been put in his hands, summoning him to a private conference with her at the Hall before they should proceed to the church. Surprised and filled with vague uneasiness, his lordship lost no time in obeying the behest.

And it was really his carriage and liveries that passed.

Within the most secluded of her suite of richly-furnished apartments at the old Hall, half-buried in the depths of a cushioned chair, reclined the bride expectant, in bridal array.

On her right, a gorgeous cheval mirror reflected in profile her beautiful form.

On her left, through the rose-colored silk hangings of the half-open bay window, wafted by the breeze, came glimpses of the pure blue sky and tender green foliage of spring, scents of fragrant flowers, and sounds of singing birds and innocent laughter, from the park.

She was alone, her attendants having, by her own desire, withdrawn.

Estelle Morelle—or "La belle Estelle," "Beautiful Stella," "the Midnight Star"—as, for her resplendent dark beauty, she was poetically named—was at this time twenty-five years of age, and more lovely than a poet's or an artist's

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.deal. Her form was of medium height, and very slender, though well-rounded, with a graceful head, over which fell rich masses of jet black, silken ringlets, shading a face of pure, pale olive complexion, with large, mournful, dark eyes, habitually vailed by the long, drooping lashes, and delicate, though full curved lips, ever patiently closed as in silent resignation. The prevailing expression of her dark, brilliant countenance was a profound melancholy.

The announcement of Miss Morelle's approaching marriage with the Viscount Montressor had created a profound sensation in the fashionable and aristocratic circles. A peerless beauty, the only child and heiress of the oldest, wealthiest and haughtiest baronet in the West of England, her heart had been as much the object of aspiration to the youthful and ardent, as her hand and fortune had been the end of desire to the mercenary and ambitious.

At the early age of seven years, Estelle had been placed at one of the first-class female institutions of learning at Paris, then as now, considered among the very best of their kind in the world, and there had been left to remain until her sixteenth year, when the sudden and calamitous breaking up of the institution, and her own severe illness, had occasioned her removal. That illness had been attended with marked changes in the constitution and temperament of the young girl.

Estelle, previously the most careless, light-hearted and capricious of children, left her chamber of convalescence a subdued, thoughtful, melancholy woman! The laughing lips of girlhood closed in patient sadness; the sparkling eyes sheathed their beams under long, shadowy lashes, now seldom lifted; the silvery, elastic voice, sank into deep and thrilling tones; the free, glad motions were measured and controlled.

She never entered another school, but completed her education under the best masters, at home. To dissipate

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what was considered a transient melancholy, her parents traveled with her over Europe, pausing at each capital and chief town, to show her all that was interesting and instructive. But, though their daughter repaid their attentions with the sweetest gratitude, and obeyed them with the gentlest docility, she showed no interest in the passing scenes. And though everywhere her extreme beauty and sweetness of disposition, not less than her fortune and position, drew around her many friends and admirers, Estelle remained alone in her isolated thoughts and feelings. Every most distinguished physician in Europe had been consulted upon her case, and the result of their wisdom was a decision that this melancholy was not the effect of ill health, still less of secret sorrow, but that it wns a constitutional phase that would probably pass away with maturing years.

They returned to England, presented their daughter at court, and introduced her into all the gayeties of fashionable life. But with no happy effect upon the spirits of Estelle, who remained profoundly unmoved amid the *eclat* that greeted her *debut.* Her picturesque beauty was the theme of all tongues—her mournful glance was fascinating—her deep tones thrilling—her touch magnetic; all felt her power, yet she who could move all others, remained unimpressed. She who sought no conquests, for that very reason perhaps, made many. A peer and two commoners, in succession, laid their fortunes at her feet, and were in turn kindly and firmly rejected.

So passed her first season in London, at the close of which her parents took her down to their seat in Devonshire. Here, in her thoughtful, quiet, unostentatious manner, she engaged in works of benevolence among the villagers and the tenantry. And her father, hoping much from this employment, gave her full liberty of action, and smiled to see that she seemed less pensive than before.

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At the beginning of the parliamentary term, the family went up to London.

And it was here in her second season in town that Estelle formed the acquaintance of Lord Montressor, a young nobleman but lately acceded to his titles and estates, but already known as a man of the most high-toned moral and intellectual excellence, as a righteous as well as a rising statesman, and as one, who in the event of a change of ministry, would be likely to be called to fill a high official position in His Majesty's new cabinet. Aside from the glare of rank and wealth and power, Charles Montressor was a glorious specimen of the Creator's workmanship. Above the average standard of height among his countrymen, broad-shouldered and deep-chested, with a noble head, and a face full of wisdom and goodness, his appearance truly indicated the warm benevolence, clear intelligence, and pure spirit of the man. His presence soon inspired Estelle with a faith which she had not been able to feel in any other that approached her. He drew nearer to her than any other had been permitted to come; he crossed the magic circle of her isolation and conversed with her as no other had been allowed to do. The world looked and said that the beautiful Stella had at last met her master and was conquered.

At this stage of affairs, the parliamentary term being over, Sir Park Morelle and his family left London for Hyde Hall.

Lord Montressor asked and received permission to follow them, and in less than a month availed himself of the privilege to do so. Thus it was in the home of her ancestors, after having obtained the cordial sanction of her parents, and believing himself sure of the affections of their daughter, Lord Montressor offered his heart and hand to the lovely Estelle, and was, to his profound astonishment, instantly and firmly rejected! In thus rejecting his suit

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she wept long and bitterly, praying his forgiveness, that the happiness she had experienced and exhibited in his society should have betrayed him into making this declaration, and beseeching him never to renew his suit; but to leave and forget her. There was something in the tone of her refusal which confirmed and deepened his previous conviction that —even in rejecting—she loved him! But with his high-toned sentiments he would not in the least degree presume upon that knowledge. Taking her hand with deferential tenderness, he said—

"Stella!—a man never but once, in his whole existence, loves a woman as I love you! I will not inquire the cause of the rejection, which you have certainly a right to make without assigning any reason for the act. And after having received this repulse, I may not in honor distress you by a renewal of my suit. But this, in parting, I must say to you —that, though I go hence, I shall not go out of the reach of your friends; I shall never address another woman; so if ever in the course of future weeks, or months, or years, however long, you may think proper to review the decision of this evening, Stella, I implore you, do not hesitate to let me know! Write but one word, 'Come,' and I return to lay an unchanged heart at your feet!"

Estelle was weeping too bitterly to reply.

"Stella, will you promise to do this?"

"Lord Montressor, best and dearest friend! Do not seek to bind yourself to one who can give you nothing in return! Try to think of the melancholy girl that you have pitied and loved, only as a shadow that fell for a moment across the sunshine of your path, and then passed away forever!—and so forget her!"

"Stella, I have pledged my honor never to renew this suit, unless you reverse in my favor the sentence you have pronounced upon it; but, inspired by the deep and deathless love I bear you, and 'hoping against hope,' I feel

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impelled to implore before leaving you that, in the event of a favorable change of sentiment or purpose toward me, you will not hesitate to give me leave to return. Stella, will you promise me so much as that?"

"Noblest friend that I have in the world, how gladly would I promise, but I must not, Montressor. Were I to do so, you would feel bound to wait the changes of my mood, and so, for a most undeserving love, might miss, in some nobler woman's affections, the happiness in store for you."

"Stella, will you raise your sweet, mournful eyes to mine one moment, that you may read my soul while I speak?"

Estelle lifted her dark orbs to meet the clear, pure, blue eyes bent with so much love and candor upon hers, and read the deep, unchanging truth and constancy of his soul as he said:

"Stella, in the presence of the heart-searching God, who sees and hears me, I assure you that I shall never love another woman as I love you, and therefore, of course, can never wed another; so that, whether you give me this slightest of hopes or not, I am equally and forever bound! *Now* will you promise, Stella? Remember, it is only to let me know in case of a change in your sentiments."

For an instant the light of an unutterable love and joy broke on her beautiful, dark face, and her smiling lips parted to speak; when, as if a sudden memory and warning had griped her very heart, she uttered a low, sharp cry, turned paler than before, and then said:

"No, no, my lord. Stella cannot even give you that. She is poorer than the poorest in gifts to you. She can only pray that you may forget her and be happy."

He looked profoundly disappointed and troubled. But soon mastering his despondency, he said hopefully:

"Well, dearest Stella, although you reject me without apparent reason, and refuse to give me the slightest promise

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or the most distant hope, yet, *I repeat*, should you, in the long future, change your purpose, and write to me one word—'Come'—I will hasten to lay at your feet an unchanged heart. Good-bye. God be with you!" and raising her hand, he bowed over it, pressed it to his lips, turned and left the room.

Some moments after, Lady Morelle, who came to seek and congratulate her daughter upon what she imagined to be the only possible result of the interview, found Estelle lying in a swoon upon the floor. It was followed by a long and terrible illness, terminating in a tediously protracted convalescence. The town season was at hand before Estelle was able to re-enter society.

They went up to London, and once more the "star of beauty" arose upon its world. And though the cloud upon her life settled darker and heavier, day by day—though she grew still more reserved, gloomy, and isolated—she was more followed, flattered, and courted than before.

Thus three years had passed away, when one morning, while the family, then occupying their town house in Berkely square, were seated at a late breakfast, and Sir Parke was engaged in reading aloud from the London Times an account of the saving of the French ship—Le Duc D'Anjou—wrecked off the coast of Algiers—Estelle uttered a low cry and sank fainting from her seat.

This attack was not, as the other had been, followed by illness; on the contrary, from that day, the cloud seemed lifted from her head, and even those who had most admired her face in its shadow, were enchanted to see how brilliant was her beauty in its sunshine! Her health and spirits daily improved, yet in the midst of all this flowing tide of new life Estelle astonished her friends by suddenly, in the height of the London season, retiring to her father's country seat, where she remained in strict seclusion from the world for eighteen months

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At the end of this period, Lord Montressor, who had never left England, or lost trace of his beloved Stella, and who was now staying at his castle in Dorsetshire, was one day seated at breakfast when the morning mail was brought him. Among a score of letters the first that attracted his attention was a dainty white envelope superscribed in a delicate handwriting. He took that up first and opened it —it contained but one word—"COME."

The light of an ineffable joy broke over his face! Oh! he had waited, patiently, hopefully, years, for that word, and at last he had received it! Thanks to Heaven in the first instance! and then pushing all the other letters unopened aside he sprung up, rang for his valet, and ordered his valise packed and horses put to the carriage.

In twenty more minutes he had reached the railway station just as the cars were about to start, and in three hours he was at Hyde Hall and standing in the presence of Estelle!"—she looking so beautiful and happy!

With the old chivalric enthusiasm of devotion, he dropped, at once, upon his knee, and raised her hand to his lips, saying—

"For four years I have hoped and waited for one word from you, and at last, beloved, you have written—'Come,' and I am at your feet, as I said, with an unchanged heart!"

"But I," she said, deeply blushing, while she held both hands to raise him—"I, my Lord, have not an unchanged heart! for longer than four years I have loved you more than woman's tongue may tell—and never more, than at the hour in which we bade farewell, as I thought, forever!"

"I know it, beloved! I knew it *then!* knew it *always!* I never doubted it! Could I be deceived in the dear heart of the woman I loved! No! and that was the secret of my patience!" he replied, taking his seat on the sofa by her side.

"And yet you never inquired, and do not even now

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inquire, why, without explanation and without hope, I sent you from my presence, and why now, without apparent reason, I summon you back!" she said, as a shade of the old sadness fell upon her beautiful face.

"Your motives, dearest, were, and are, your own. Not until your spirit move you to do so, shall you give them to me! I have full confidence in you, beautiful Stella!"

"*Confidence! oh my God?*" she exclaimed in a low, deep, thrilling tone.

"Why, what is the matter, dearest?"

She looked up suddenly, a smile of worshiping love, breaking like sunlight over her dark face, and said—

"Nothing, nothing my lord! but that all your thoughts and feelings are so elevated beyond your poor Estelle's! And yet she would almost choose it so! for could she be an angel, she would wish you to be something far higher—a god!"

"Sweet enthusiast! moderate your aspirations, or the world and its people will disappoint you! Be not an idolater; worship only God, my Stella."

Such was their meeting!

Yet, occasionally, throughout the interview, a sudden shadow like the recurrence of a painful thought, would fall upon her bright face and then pass as it came.

They were engaged, and within a few days the marriage was announced to take place on the first of May.

But it was observed by the nearest friends of the bride, that from the day of her betrothal, her spirits had been marked by the strangest fluctuations. Sometimes with her beautiful dark face illumined with a deep, still, almost religious joy, she moved about as it were, on "winged feet." or sat brooding in a happy trance. At other times, she fell into deep gloom and anxiety, as inexplicable as it was alarming to her friends, who greatly feared her relapse into the deep melancholy that had so long overshadowed her,

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and that they had grown to dread as a serious constitutional malady. But they hoped every thing from her approaching marriage with the man she loved. Lord Montressor observed with the deepest interest the uncertain moods of his betrohed; but with the high-toned sentiments that distinguished him, refrained from inquiring, and awaited her voluntary revelations.

At last the first of May, the marriage day, upon which I have presented the parties to the reader, arrived, and all the *haut ton*, as I said, were gathered at the Hall or at the church to do honor to the solemnities.

And the expectant bride, in her bridal robe and vail waited within her boudoir, the arrival of the bridegroom, whom she had summoned to a private interview before they should proceed to the church. She had not long to wait. He who quickly responded to her slightest intimation, immediately obeyed her call.

Yet when she heard his firm elastic step approaching,

"Now God have mercy on me!" she prayed, and covered her face with her hands.

He entered, unannounced, and saying,

"My beautiful Stella! I am here, you perceive, by your commands!"

She dropped her hands, and revealing a face pale with misery, spoke in a thrilling, deep, impassioned tone—

"You are here by my *supplication*, my lord! I have no right to command."

"We will waive that! what is your will, my dearest Stella?"

"My *prayer*, my lord—is first, for your forgiveness."

"*Forgiveness?*—my Stella!"

"Aye! my dear lord! you see before you a penitent and a supplicant, who may soon be something far more wretched!"

"My Stella! what mean you?"

"Come to the window, Lord Montressor!" she said, ris-

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ing and preceding him. "Look out," she continued, putting aside the rose-colored hangings, and revealing a view of the park below, alive with its restless multitude. "What are all these people waiting for, my lord?"

"What are they waiting for, my Stella?—for that, for which I also wait, with how much more impatience!" he answered, while a deep flush of love and joy, for an instant, supplanted the anxiety on his face.

"They wait to see a bride pass, where a bride may never go!" she said in a solemn voice.

"Stella! great Heaven! what say you!" he exclaimed, gazing on her with profound astonishment.

"That the bride they expect is unworthy to stand before God's holy altar beside Lord Montressor!"

"Unworthy, Stella! You!"

"*Most unworthy,* my lord!" she said, dropping her arms, and dropping her head in an attitude of the deepest misery. "I should have made this confession long ago, Lord Montressor; but I have deceived you—I have deceived you!"

"In what respect, Stella? My God! It cannot be! No, it cannot be! that while betrothed to me, you do not love me!"

"*Not love you! Oh! my dear lord!*" she murmured, in a voice of thrilling tenderness that carried conviction of her truth to his deepest heart.

"What mean you, then, dearest one? if indeed you return my deep love."

"Oh! I do, I do, Montressor; whatever happens, wherever you go, take that assurance with you! I love you, my lord! shall ever love you, even though after what I shall have told you, you repulse and hate me, and go to our friends and say,—'That woman whom I was about to wed, is but a whited sepulchre, whom I have proved, and whom I now reject'—and so leave me to the scorn of men, still I say—ever shall say—I love you, Lord Montressor! I love

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you, and the consciousness of being unworthy of your love, is the bitterest element in my punishment," she said, in a voice of such profound misery, that Lord Montressor could scarcely continue to believe her agitation unfounded or exaggerated.

He dropped upon a seat, and sitting still and white as a carved image of stone, gazed upon her, waiting her further communications.

She had thrown herself into her chair and covered her face with her hands.

"Speak, Stella!" at last he said, in kind, encouraging tones.

She dropped her hands from a face from which a deep blush had burned away the lilies, essayed to obey, but the words seemed to suffocate her, and she remained silent.

"Speak, dearest Stella," once more he said.

She cowered and shuddered, murmuring—

"Oh! kill me! kill me! Indeed I think it would be right!"

"My beloved Stella," he said, in a voice of deep tenderness, rising and approaching her—"can you not trust in me?"

"Ah! not with loving words though! Kill me not with loving words!" she cried almost wildly.

"Stella, be calm, beloved! You bitter self-accusation cannot make you seem unworthy to me. Take time and explain."

"Lord Montressor! it was my deep love—alas! the selfish and injurious sentiment, unworthy the holy name of love,—that has sealed my lips so long! A hundred times I have been on the point of making to you a revelation, that I have never even made to my parents, and as often the terrible fear that I should never afterward see your face again, has withheld me."

"My dearest Stella! I know not what you may be about

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to reveal to me; and since it is not that you do not love me, *I* do not dread to hear it. I cannot be mistaken in your pure, womanly heart, Stella; and here I pledge you my word, that whatever that revelation may be, *it shall make no change in our present relations*"

"What! Oh, Heaven! What do you say!" exclaimed Stella, holding her breath in listening.

"I say, beloved, that in an hour from this, I shall with your permission, lead you to the altar; and that whatever you may in the meanwhile reveal—since it is not that you have ceased to love me—shall not change my purpose."

"What, what, have I not misunderstood you, my lord? You did not mean to tell me——?"

"I meant to to tell you what I now repeat,—that nothing you have to reveal shall change our present relations Come, dear Stella! if any secret sorrow oppresses your heart, lay it trustingly on mine. Confide in one, who in another hour will be your husband."

"Dear Father in Heaven! dost Thou hear him?—dost Thou hear this man whom I have so long deceived, and whom I would have so bitterly wronged. Montressor!" she said in a voice of thrilling tenderness,—"does not the grief, and terror, and humiliation, written on my brow, *warn* you that some deep sin is to be confessed?—something that may, or must change our present relations, and make it incumbent on you to go below and announce to our friends—'this woman is totally lost, and our marriage is at an end.' You are warned. Will you still promise blindly?"

"Not blindly, dearest Stella! That something in your past life has gone very wrong,—that you have hitherto shrunk from confiding in me, I do begin to see; but that your sense of honor now obliges you, despite your terrors, and in the face of all consequences, to make the revelation, I also see! Stella, I have known and loved you, only you, for seven years! I am not a man to be mistaken in any

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woman; much less in you, whom I have known and loved thus long! I love you! esteem you! trust in you! Do you likewise confide in me! Lay your secret sorrow on your promised husband's faithful heart, beloved, for he is able to shelter and sustain you," he said, and went and closed the blinds of the bay-window, to shut out the glaring sun and the merry laughter, and then returned and sat down, and held out his arms to receive her, saying—

"Come, love! come drop your weary head upon my bosom, and whisper what you have to say."

"No, no, Lord Montressor; at your feet, rather, should your poor Stella tell her story," she murmured, sinking down before him, and dropping her face upon her hands; but he caught and raised her to his heart, and held her there.

"Come now, dearest Stella, speak!"

"Alas, alas, my lord, you think me a young girl whom you clasp to your bosom. I am not! What, you do not put me thence?"

He gathered her closer, and bent his head down protectingly over her.

"Lord Montressor, do you hear me? Do you hear me say that I am no young girl whom you gather to your bosom?"

"A widow, then, my Stella," he said, changing color, but modulating his voice so that no slightest inflection should wound her stricken heart.

"Yes, a widow! Oh, noble *Sans peur!* And you do not reproach me?"

"I do not. Come, now, tell me the whole story, love."

"Lord Montressor, you know so much of my life that I need but use a few words to inform you all you require to be told of its fatal, secret history. You are already aware that, at the age of seven years, I was sent to Paris, and placed at Madame L'Orient's *Pensionnat des Demoiselles*,

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an establishment of the highest reputation, where I remained until I was fifteen years of age. It was when I had but just completed my fourteenth year that Victoire L'Orient, the only son of my teacher, was presented to me by his mother—" Here the voice of Estelle broke down, and she paused as if unable to proceed. Her companion waited a little while, and then said, encouragingly:

"Speak freely, dear Stella."

"I am sure, Lord Montressor, that I do not mean to endeavor to shift the blame from my own shoulders to those of others, but at this distance of time I see clearly that Victoire L'Orient was introduced to me by his mother with sinister views—to ensnare, in fact, the heart, and win the hand of the wealthy English heiress. Victoire was ten years my senior, handsome, accomplished, insinuating, and, since the truth must be revealed, unprincipled; though of his moral turpitude I had no suspicion until it was too late! too late!" Again the voice of Stella sank, and she covered her face with her hands.

"Compose yourself, dear love, and go on, that this may be finished, and your heart relieved."

"Without seeming to do so, Madame L'Orient fostered our acquaintance into friendship, if friendship could be said to exist between the deceiver and the deceived—into intimacy at least. Looking back now, I cannot understand the spell of fascination that was woven around me. Enough, alas, that I thought I loved Victoire, and was drawn step by step, first into an admission of my sentiments toward him; then into an engagement, subject to my parent's consent; and, finally, without appealing to them, into a clandestine marriage."

Stella ceased and buried her face in her hands. Lord Montressor laid his hand on her head, and both were silent for a little while; after which, she resumed, in a voice of thrilling passion,—

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"Oh, yet think, in judging me, how young I was; how inexperienced I was, how fatally influenced, in what intriguing hands, and then how quickly and bitterly I repented."

"I do not *judge* you, dear one; I only *wait* to hear the end."

"I am sure that while she was careful not to appear in the matter, Madame L'Orient, who was an accomplished intriguante, forwarded our marriage. Alas, before many months, I understood and felt, both how bitterly I had sinned and had been sinned against. I remained at school as before my marriage, as it was the decision of my husband and mother-in-law, who did not wish the reputation of her establishment to suffer, to keep the union a secret until after I should have finally left school and returned to England and my father's house. My husband, who had lodgings near the Pensionnat, visited me at his own convenience rather than at mine. Oh, very soon indeed I discovered the worthlessness of the man who had ensnared my childish heart and hand! Would you believe of any man scarcely, such things as I am about to tell you of him?—not that I wish to reflect dishonor on the dead, but that I wish you, Lord Montressor, to know how soon and how terribly I expiated my sin. Victoire was addicted to inebriation, to gambling and licentiousness, and every species of dissipation and excess. These vices kept him always in want of money; and he not only seized and turned into cash my girlish trinkets, and appropriated all my pocket-money, but *abused* me when I had no more to give him, bidding me write to my father for funds."

"Oh-h!" groaned Lord Montressor, with the energy of a man who strives hard to repress himself.

"I did as he bade me. I drew freely on my father, who always lectured me severely for my supposed extravagance, *without* always honoring my supposed drafts; and when he did not," continued Estelle, rising, standing before him, ex-

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tending both her hands, and surveying her own beautiful figure, "this little form you cherish so tenderly, this slight frame, that was even smaller then, bore, in black and blue, the marks of his violence."

"Oh-h!" once more groaned Lord Montressor, losing self-command, starting up, and pacing the floor. Then returning, he reseated Estelle, stood leaning over her chair, and asked under his breath:

"Was the creature left to die a natural death?"

Stella shook her head, saying:

"Patience, beloved! God had patience with him, why should not we? As for myself, my sufferings were a just retribution. The froward maiden and undutiful daughter was fitly punished. Young as I was I felt it so, and thus, with some grace of patience, I accepted it all—all, Montressor!"

Again, unable to proceed, she paused, and dropped her face upon her hands, he waiting silently. Presently she gathered firmness and proceeded:

"In a year from my sinful marriage, I became the mother of an infant girl. My swimming senses scarcely perceived the child, before all consciousness left me, and life was a blank for many weeks. When I returned to consciousness, I found myself at a hotel, in charge of my father and mother; but my husband and child—where were they?—how long had I been at the hotel?—and how much of my circumstances did my parents know? These questions soon forced themselves upon my mind, ruined my rest by day and night, and seriously retarded my recovery. I feared my father even more then than now; and I dared not risk a single inquiry upon the subjects of my anxiety. At last, I discovered that I had been ill, though not always unconscious, for eight weeks; that my parents had been with me only a few days, and that they were totally unsuspicious of my new relations as wife and mother. I dared not inform

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them. I waited restlessly, impatiently, for the appearance of my mother-in-law, who never came. At last, with caution, I inquired after Madame L'Orient. I was told that her establishment was broken up, and was recommended to be still, and refrain from exciting conversation. As I convalesced, I gradually learned the truth—very gradually, for had the knowledge come suddenly, I should not now be here, telling you the story: the terrible shock must have killed me," she said, and shuddered from head to foot.

"Compose yourself, and proceed, dear Stella! You speak to one who sympathizes with every phase of your suffering."

"Of my *punishment!*—that is the proper word."

"Do not reproach yourself so severely, Stella; but proceed, my love."

"Ah, how shall I go on! how shall I inform you of the horrors that came to my knowledge? I should have told you, that for a week before I was first taken ill, I missed Victoire, but believing he had gone upon one of his frequent pleasure excursions, and glad to be left for a few days in peace, I felt no uneasiness on account of his absence. After my recovery I learned that at that very time he was under arrest upon the charge of treason. And during the period of my long illness he had been tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. His punishment was afterward commuted to transportation to the penal colonies. He was then on his way to Algiers.

"His mother, who was seriously implicated in the same crime, had been examined, and for want of evidence against her, discharged. Notwithstanding her acquittal, the popular feeling was so hostile to Madame L'Orient, that she was not only compelled to break up her establishment, but to leave the neighborhood. After a great deal of difficulty, I contrived to secure a private interview with Madame, before she left the city and inquire the fate of my infant. 'Dead

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and buried in the Cemetière des Innocens,' was the answer I received. She had lived but an hour, and died about the same time that I had fallen into a state of insensibility. What more had I to do in Paris, or even in the world. My life seemed blighted, my heart broken, my doom sealed at fifteen years of age. My injured and unsuspicious parents, concerned for their daughter's failing health and spirits, took me to the German baths, thence to Sicily, thence over Europe, and finally brought me home to England, in the faint hope that quietness and native air might do for me that which travel and change of scene had failed to do. In vain! there was no hope, or help for me in this world. My sorrow was deepened by the necessity of concealing its dreadful cause. I dared not confide that secret passage of my life to either of my parents. You know the uncompromising arrogance of Sir Parke, and the sensitive delicacy of Lady Morelle. Their only and cherished daughter the wife of a ———! The revelation would have killed my mother, would have driven my father mad! I bore my sorrow—my punishment in silence; but do you wonder at my deep, incurable melancholy? As a last resort, they took me up to London, presented me at Court, and introduced me into the whirl of fashionable life. My debut in society made what is called 'a sensation,'—my career was, in common parlance, 'successful.' I had many 'eligible' suitors; perhaps the sadness that shrunk from observation and attention, was from its very strangeness attractive. At length *you* came, and saw and loved me, all unworthy as I was, and I soon perceived in you the master of my heart and life! But, oh! the unspeakable agony of feeling this, and feeling too, that I never, never, never could be yours! So, at the last day, feels the sinner who sees, at length, that for some fair poisonous apple of Sodom, unlawfully seized on earth, he has lost the kingdom of Heaven! *Do you still wonder at my deep, incurable melancholy?* We parted

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I bore that sharp anguish, as I had borne all the rest, even as the just retribution of my sin!"

"My dear, dear Stella! you reproach yourself without measure."

"When I recovered from the long, nervous fever into which that great trial had thrown me—to please my parents I re-entered society, and was followed, flattered, courted as before; but nothing would dissipate the gloom of my soul. At last, while in Berkely-square, at my father's breakfast-table, I heard him read from the Daily Times, among other items of news, the account of the wreck of the French ship '*Le Duc D'Anjou*,' on her passage from Algiers. Now the slightest circumstance relating to that Province had for me a terrible interest, and I listened as I should never have done had not the ship sailed from that coast. The last name on the list of the lost was that of Victoire L'Orient!"

"Great Heaven!"

"God forgive me! I thought not of the horrors of the shipwreck, the sufferings of the crew, or even of the loss of the poor men drowned with Victoire. I only felt my evil genius gone, the gloom and terror lifted from my life, and I swooned with the shock of a great deliverance!"

"I do not wonder, good Heaven!"

"When the reaction came, I knew how wrong had been this feeling; and to atone for it, and to pay respect to *death*, if not to the *dead*, I withdrew from society and retired to this place, where I remained in seclusion eighteen months, just as I should have done in mourning the decease of a near and honored relative. I brought down that copy of the Times, containing the account of the shipwreck, and have preserved it—here it is," she said, lifting an old paper from a table near her. "Look at it—there is a note in parenthesis following the name of Victoire L'Orient—a mention it only as a providential confirmation of the identity of the man."

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Lord Montressor opened the paper, looked down the column until he came to the list of the lost, and to the last name—Victoire L'Orient, with the following annotation.

"This man, it may be remembered, was some years since convicted of a complicity in the treason of De Vil, attended with circumstances of a memorable character, and was sentenced to be transported for life to the convict colony of Algiers. He had lately received his pardon, and was on his way to France."

"Why have you preserved this, Stella?" inquired Lord Montressor, when he had finished reading.

"I do not know—some strange instinct!—perhaps to prevent my fancying the account to be a mere dream. Well! at the end of my eighteen months of self-inflicted seclusion, I summoned you, dearest friend, to my side. You came, loyal heart! you came at once! I meant to have immediately revealed to you the secret story of my sin and punishment, and so, before you should have had time to commit yourself, left my fate in your hands. But that first interview was so sweet that I could not disturb its harmony! I said, 'I will tell him to-morrow.' Morning came, and we were so happy, I shrank from clouding our bright joy; I said, 'I will tell him in the evening.' Your very perfections frightened me from the task. Again and again I postponed the revelation, in the vain hope that another day I should have more courage to make it. Alas! day by day, the disclosure grew to seem more strange and difficult. At length as the day of our marriage drew near, each hour rendered the necessity of my confession more imminent, and the act of making it more terrible! Last Sunday I thought I would then tell you; but—I *could* not do it! Yesterday I felt sure that I should inform you; but, the first attempted words suffocated me! The scene around swam before me!"

"Alas! did you so dread me, my gentle Stella?"

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"This morning *all* dreads vanished before one great fear!—the fear of presently standing before the Lord's holy altar, to palm upon you as a maiden's hand, the hand of the widow of Victoire L'Orient. This is my revelation, Lord Montressor," she said, rising with a certain mournful dignity. "I sinned first and greatly against my parents in contracting a secret and unauthorized marriage; and long and terribly have I expiated it! But I have sinned even more against your pure, noble nature, in keeping this from your knowledge since our engagement, and even up to this last hour! It has cost me much to make it now; but now, that all is said, I feel relieved and strengthened! You are my judge, Lord Montressor."

"Dearest Stella," he said, taking her hand, reseating her, and standing, leaning over her chair, "let me be now, as always, perfectly frank with you. First, let me repeat that your painful story has made no difference in my feelings and purposes toward you, nor, as a matter of course, in our present and future relations. I do not gainsay, dear Stella, that your premature marriage was a great wrong; but I remember that you were an inexperienced child in the hands of intriguing and insinuating people, with whom you were not prepared to cope! I do not either deny that your concealment of your previous marriage, first from your parents, and afterward from your affianced husband, was a greater wrong; but I can easily understand how, in the first case, the haughty severity of Sir Parke, and the sensitive pride of Lady Morelle, should alike have frightened you from making the revelation; and still better can I sympathize with your shrinking reluctance to confide such a secret to me; and feel how much more difficult every day of delay must have rendered such a confession; and through all, how your refined and sensitive mind, brooding day and night over your misfortune, should have come to exaggerate both the magnitude of the fault and the difficulty of concealing

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it; and, finally, my victorious Stella, I can appreciate the triumph of principle in your present disclosure. Come to my heart, sweet Stella!" he said, opening his arms and gathering her to his bosom.

"Not until this hour, dear Stella, have I fully won your heart," he whispered, dropping his face caressingly upon the silky black ringlets of her bowed head—"not until this hour have I fully won your heart!"

"But now I am all your own. Oh, my lord! my lord!—all your own—heart, soul, and spirit!" she said, in a voice of thrilling tenderness. "I had that blighting secret, that I dared not lay on the strong breast of the father that gave me life, nor on the tender bosom of the mother that bore me, but which at last I confide to your own great heart, and you receive the trust, and gather me within the fold of your powerful arms, and have no word of bitter reproach for my sin, but only a tender compassion for my sufferings; no humbling pity for my weakness, but only a noble sympathy with my struggles, and praise for my late—too late victory!"

"Reproach for *you*, my wounded dove? my gentle, patient sufferer? Nay, rest on my bosom; rest sweetly here awhile," he murmured, smoothing her hair with his hand.

"Oh, the blessed relief, the sweet, sweet repose, the measureless content, I find on this sustaining breast!" she breathed, in a deep sigh of deliverance and rest.

"Would for your own sake, beloved, that you had sooner laid the burden of your secret sorrow upon your promised husband's faithful heart—that you might have sooner found the relief he can give you, gentle and beautiful Stella."

"Beautiful! did you say, my lord? Would, indeed, that I were infinitely beautiful, that I possessed genius and accomplishments equal to that beauty, and wealth and power to match both, for your sake, Montressor; for I should say then as now,—'all that I am and all that I have belong less

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to me than to my dear and honored lord! I am his own, his own! I am cradled in his heart! I live, breathe, think, love only in and from his great life.'"

"You are, indeed, sweet Stella, the heart of my heart!"

"Would your Stella were more worthy of you."

"More worthy of me? Do not talk so, love! Women are queens, always too good, for men; and you of women, most queenly, and should not bate your state, to speak to your subject in this style," said Lord Montressor.

"Woman should not reveal her heart so plainly even to him who possesses it! Is that your meaning, my lord, and is it so?—for I, you see, do not know! I only know intimately one woman—myself, and now I am not so much myself as you? Shall I practice reserve with *you?*"

"No, no, dearest; too long you have practiced reserve."

"Well, that is over. I have laid my soul open to your view! I have shown you a sorrow that I dared not trust to father or mother; even as we let the holy eye of God see things which we conceal from our dearest friends."

"But now your parents must be informed of all, dear Stella."

"Oh! no, no, no! It would kill the one and craze the other," exclaimed Estelle, white with terror. "No, no; none but your own kindly heart could bear the revelation!"

"Fear nothing, dear Stella. They need not be told just yet; with their feelings, the disclosure of such a story concerning their daughter, Miss Morelle, might indeed be attended with serious consequences. I shall wait until the law has invested me with the exclusive right to watch over your honor, peace and welfare, and to protect you, if need be, even against the severity of your father, and the reproaches of your mother, before I make the disclosure, and then, the story told them of Lady Montressor by the lips of her husband, who here pledges himself to bear her blame-

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less and harmless through all—will come very much softened to their ears."

"Ah, Heaven! Lord Montressor, will you do this?"

"It must be done, beloved! Your parents must know all; your life must be cleared and calmed. I take that task upon myself. Resign yourself to my charge; trust in me; lay your weary, young head on my breast, and let your spirit sleep if you will; for no harm can come to you in the shelter of my love!"

"Oh! you are so good and great! Would I were better and wiser for your sake! You should have an angel for a wife!"

Lord Montressor smiled.

"I do not aspire to an angel, or to any better or happier woman. I love you just so, with the mournful earth beauty in your eyes."

The opening of the door startled them, and Lady Morelle entered.

She was a magnificent-looking woman—of a tall and finely-proportioned figure, and a haughty carriage, delicate aquiline features, with an expression of blended pride and fastidiousness, fair complexion, blue eyes, and light hair arranged in plain bandeaux. She wore a light blue brocade satin dress, and a mantilla of rich white lace. She entered, smiling proudly.

Lord Montressor rose to greet her.

"Good morning, my lord, I hope the interview this most capricious of dear Stellas demanded, is at an end, for, whether it be or not, I must interrupt you. It is half-past eleven, and if there is a marriage to be solemnized to-day, it is full time we were at the church."

"Our interview is concluded, madam! I am ready, and only waiting your ladyship's convenience," said Lord Montressor advancing an easy chair for the lady's reception.

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"Thank you, I do not wish to rest. Your attendants, my lord, are——"

"They are probably now waiting me at the church, madam, where I will meet you a few minutes hence. *Au revoir*, dear Stella!" said his lordship, and lifting the hand of his promised bride to his lips, and then bowing to Lady Morelle, he left the room.

The lady rang for her daughter's maid.

"I declare, Estelle, I never knew so strange a girl! Now what, possibly, could you have wanted to say to Montressor this morning?"

"I only wanted to put his heart to a last trial, dear mamma."

"Your head is turned, I think!—but here comes Finette. Now stand up and have your robe smoothed, and your wreath and vail put on."

At this moment the French dressing-maid, Finette, entered, and Estelle stood up before the cheval mirror, while the girl drew down the folds of her robe, and took up the virginal wreath of orange blossoms to set upon her head.

"Not that—not that, Finette! Open that box, it contains a coronet I have chosen for this occasion."

The girl raised the lid of the box that her mistress had indicated, and drew thence a rich wreath of passion flowers.

"That is the wreath I shall wear, Finette."

"Why, my dearest Estelle, how eccentric! Who ever heard of a bride wearing other than orange blossoms in her hair? Do, love, be reasonable!"

"Do, sweet mamma, indulge me on my marriage day and permit me even to be *un*reasonable in the trifling affair of choosing a wreath."

"Well, well, as you please, you dear, eccentric creature! Lady Montressor will soon be in a position to give the law to fashion in all matters of taste, and it is easy to foresee

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that she will be an innovator!" said Lady Morelle, proudly and fondly, as she gazed upon her beautiful daughter.

And thus the wreath of passion flowers was placed upon her brow, the vail thrown over her head, and the toilet of the bride was complete.

"Come now, my love, let us go down," said the lady, giving her arm to her daughter to conduct her from the room.

In five more minutes Estelle Morelle was handed into a close carriage, the three other seats of which were occupied by her father, mother, and first bridesmaid. This carriage was preceded by that of the Duchess of Graveminster, and that of Lord Dazzleright, and was followed by a barouche containing the four other bridesmaids, and by various coaches of the friends, relatives and acquaintances, of the bride's family, who had been invited to attend her to the church. As the procession defiled down the grand avenue, the village men and maidens gathered on either side to see it pass, and children threw flowers in the road. The bell rung a joyous peal, that continued until the cortege reached the church, which was a small gothic building just beyond the Park gates. The yard was filled with carriages of almost every description, and among them was recognized the crimson and grey liveries of Lord Montressor. As the cortege entered the church-yard, Lord Montressor alighted, and stood waiting until the carriage of Sir Parke Morelle, drew up before the church door, when he went and received his bride as she descended, and bowing with reverential tenderness, drew her arm within his own, and preceded by the Duchess of Graveminster on the arm of Sir Parke Morelle, and then by Lady Morelle on that of Lord Dazzleright, and followed by the bridesmaids and groomsmen in pairs, entered the church. The pews and the side aisles were cowded to suffocation; and the beadle had enough to do to keep the centre aisle sufficiently clear to admit the passage of the bridal procession.

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Amid all this assembly, one group, gathered into a remote and deeply shaded pew in the corner to the extreme left of the entrance, in their manifest desire to avoid observation, might, at any other time, have attracted notice. But now all eyes were fixed upon the entree of the procession. This group consisted of a middle-aged, dark-complexioned, mercurial little woman of foreign aspect, clothed in black; a young man, with a tall and well-proportioned figure, regular features, deeply-bronzed complexion and jet black hair and eyes, of somewhat sinister expression; an elderly, dignified, magisterial-looking gentleman, and lastly—of a policeman who seemed to be retained in the service of the party.

As the bridal train entered the church, the little swarthy woman quickly averted her head and let down her thick black vail, and the young man stooped out of sight, as if to pick up something from the floor. The magisterial-looking individual put on his spectacles, and regarded the train with an ambiguous half-smile; while the police-officer looked on with unconcealed curiosity. When they had passed the pew, the little restless foreign woman plucked at the sleeve of the young man and pointing to the procession now approaching the altar, exclaimed quickly, under her breath,—

"Look you, Victoire! Can you bear this, then?"

"No matter, Madame! I wait!" said the Frenchman with a wicked smile.

"Will you not stop this, then?"

"No, no Madame! I wait!"

"For why, you wait?"

"For that she *des*pise, she *ab*hor, she scorn me—the convict! Very well!—I make her to be also convict herself!" hissed the man between his closed teeth.

Meanwhile the bridal train proceeded up the aisle and formed before the altar in something like the following or-

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der—the old Duchess of Graveminster and Sir Parke Morelle, leading the way, filed off to the extreme right; Lady Morelle and Lord Dazzleright, following, passed off to the left; next came the bride and bridegroom who took their places in the centre; then their attendants, coming up in pairs, divided and formed on either side—the bridesmaids filling up the segment of the semicircle between the bride and her mother, and the groomsmen occupying the corresponding space between the bridegroom and his father-in-law.

The sun shining in rich, deep-toned glory through the gorgeously stained glass Gothic windows on either side the high altar, never fell upon a more imposing bridal circle. There was the bridegroom, with his tall, well set, kingly form, and most noble head and face, full of conscious power, and wisdom, and protective love; and the bride with her dark, bright, wondrous beauty and her matchless grace; and the stately bridemen and the fair bridemaidens.—

"Each a queen by virtue of her breast and brow;"

and there were the dignified Sir Parke, the regal Lord Morelle, the haughty old Duchess of Graveminster and the splendid Lord Dazzleright. And there within the altar rails before the aisle stood the venerable Bishop of Exeter, between two assistant clergymen. And all—congregation, companions, and officiating ministers, were regarding with looks of admiration, affection, or pride, the presence of the beautiful bride.

The Bishop opened the book. And every whisper was hushed, and every eye reverently dropped as the venerable prelate, in a solemn voice, pronounced the first words of the imposing ritual.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together, here in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this man and this woman, in holy matrimony; which

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is commended of St. Paul to be honorable among all men; and therefore is not to be entered into unadvisedly, or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly and in the fear of God. Into this holy state these two people present come now to be joined.

"If any man can show just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever, hold his peace."

The Bishop now made the usual solemn pause, during which not a breath seemed drawn in the silent church.

Though had any one been sufficiently near that ill-omened group in the shadowy corner pew, they might have caught the deep, hurried whisper of the woman—

"Attend you, Victoire!—listen, then, my son!" And the hissing reply of the man—

"Yes, Madame!—but mon Dieu! I wait!"

Meanwhile the rites proceeded—the grave voice of the prelate was pronouncing the question—

"George Charles, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance, in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep thee only unto her as long as ye both shall live?"

The Bishop paused.

And the bridegroom, fixing his eyes in unutterable love upon the downcast, beautiful face of his bride, in a deep, proud, tender voice responded—"I will."

Then the same question being put to her, she lifted her large eyes for an instant to his, and a glow of ineffable devotion suffused her beautiful, dark face as she too breathed the same vow.

At the next question—"Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?"—Sir Parke Morelle stepped forward, took the hand of his daughter and placed it in that of the

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Bishop who transferred it to the hand of the bride-groom Lord Montressor received the cherished gift reverently, tenderly, with a deep inclination of his noble head, and a thril ling pressure of his clasping hand.

Then followed the putting on of the ring, and then the prayers, the valedictory, and finally the nuptial benediction.

The imposing solemnities were over.

And friends gathered around with blessings; and then came in turn, the grave, earnest, tender, gay or gallant forms of congratulations—as the officiating ministers, the father, mother, bridemaids and bridemen pressed around with many kind wishes.

This occasioned some considerable delay, in the midst of which the ominous party in the dark corner pew might have been observed to steal out and retire from the church.

"Enough! enough!" at length smilingly said Sir Parke, sympathizing with the blushing embarrassment of the recipient of all these compliments, and taking her hand and placing it upon the arm of Lord Montressor, who drew it closely to his side, bowed around to his friends, and turned to lead his bride from the church—a performance more easily to be wished than accomplished; for the people were now pressing out of the pews, and the aisles were choked up with the crowd. Thus their progress from the altar to the door was an alternate step and pause—a sort of stop-march. And thus a delay of more than half an hour intervened between the moment of their receiving the nuptial benediction and that of their issuing from the church door. As the church, the yard was crowded with people of all classes, eager to see the bride pass.

The whole party, including the officiating Bishop and clergymen, were expected to return to Hyde Hall to partake of the wedding breakfast; after which, Lord and Lady Montressor were to set out for his lordship's castle in Dorsetshire, where they intended to pass the honeymoon.

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The church-yard was so crowded that it was with great difficulty and after much hindrance that Lord Montressor's carriage could be driven up. And with his shrinking bride upon his arm, and her friends around, he waited before the church door, until it drew up, and one of the footmen alighted, let down the steps and opened the door.

His lordship then bowed to his friends, and was about to hand his lady into the carriage, when a policeman, pressing through the crowd, placed himself between the carriage door and the bridal pair, intercepting their further passage, while he respectfully inquired—

"Which of these ladies, here present, bears the name of Estelle L'Orient?"

"*No* lady here bears that name; stand out of the way, sir," said Lord Montressor, haughtily, while Estelle, with a half-suppressed cry, lowered her vail and leaned heavily upon his arm.

"Let us pass, sir!" repeated his lordship, sternly.

"Pardon me, my lord, if in the discharge of my duty I cannot obey your lordship," answered the officer, who, in manners and address seemed much superior to his class.

"What mean you, then, sir?" gravely inquired Lord Montressor, while Estelle hid her face in the folds of her vail against his arm.

"My lord, I have a warrant here for the arrest of one Estelle L'Orient, and if I mistake not, this is the lady," said the officer, indicating the bride by a respectful inclination of his head toward her.

"Yes! Mon Dieu, that is the woman!" exclaimed a shrill voice, coming from the little old dark and shriveled Frenchwoman, who stood at a short distance in the crowd.

"Eh! Mon Dieu, yes!—that is *my* woman!—that is *my* bride!—that is the wife of the felon!" exclaimed the vindictive looking Frenchman by her side, gesticulating the while like a madman.

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A crowd of astonished faces now pressed closely upon the group, around the carriage-door, before which stood the policeman. And through this crowd, as one having authority, now came Park Morelle, inquiring in haughty displeasure—

"What is the meaning of this delay? Good people, give way! My lord, in the name of Heaven put Lady Montressor into the carriage, and drive on! Let us get out of this! Why Montressor! Estelle! what the fiend is the meaning of all this?" exclaimed the baronet, perceiving now for the first time by the pale, corrugated brow of the bridegroom, the shuddering form and hidden face of the bride, the resolute bearing of the policeman, and the horrified looks of the people, that something—he guessed not what—was fearfully wrong.

"What is the meaning of all this? Montressor, why do you not speak?" he asked, in an agitated voice—when, turning haughtily upon the police-officer, he demanded.

"What is *your* business here?"

"Excuse me, Sir Parke Morelle, I am here on duty."

"*What* duty, fellow?"

"I am charged with a warrant for the apprehension of one Estelle L'Orient."

"WHOM?" frowningly demanded the baronet.

"One Estelle L'Orient—this lady."

"Out of the way, fellow! You are drunk, and richly deserve to be sent to prison. There is no such person here. Out of the way, I say, or I shall give you in charge!" exclaimed the baronet, losing all patience.

"Pardon me, Sir Parke, but I must execute my warrant," persisted the man; then stepping forward, and laying his hand upon the shoulder of the bride, he said:

"Estelle L'Orient, I arrest you in the king's name; you are my prisoner."

"*Sirrah!*" thundered Sir Parke, striding forward and

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striking off from his daughter's shoulder the desecrating hand of the policeman: "Are you frantic?—have you the least idea of what sacrilege means?—do you know what you are about?"

"Perfectly well, Sir Park Morelle. I am about to take this lady into custody," said the officer, approaching his prisoner.

"Begone, fellow, or by Heaven! mad or drunk, you shall dearly rue your mistake."

"*Sir Parke Morelle mistakes;* but he will not resist his majesty's warrant," said the man, drawing the instrument from his pocket; and, while the crowd pressed closer around in amazement and wonder, Sir Parke stood the picture of incredulous astonishment and rage; and Lord Montressor, with corrugated brow and compressed lips, continued to support the form of Estelle, who now stood with clasped hands, white face, and stony eyes, gazing upon the figure of the Frenchman as upon that of a phantom raised from the dead—the policeman unfolded and read the warrant.

County of Devon.—To the Constable of Hyde and all other peace-officers in the said county of Devon:

Forasmuch as Gabrielle L'Orient, widow, now in this said county, hath this day made information and complaint upon oath before me, George Bannerman, one of his majesty's justices of the peace in and for the said county, that Estelle L'Orient, of the said county, on this Thursday of the first instant, at the parish church of the parish of Hyde, feloniously intermarried with George Charles, Lord Viscount Montressor, in and during the life of her husband, Victoire L'Orient, now living in these realms—these are, therefore, to command you, in his majesty's name forthwith to apprehend and bring before me, or some other of his majesty's justices of the peace in and of the said county,

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the body of the said Estelle L'Orient, to answer unto the said complaint, and to be further dealt with according to law. Herein fail you not at your peril. Given under my hand and seal, this first day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ——.

Signed, GEORGE BANNERMAN.

The officer finished the reading, folded the document, re turned it to his breast-coat pocket, and stood for a while waiting. No one, who had not seen, could imagine the consternation that held the assembled crowd in a trance of breathless silence. Sir Parke Morelle was the first to break the fearful spell.

"MADAM!" he said, striding up and confronting his wretched daughter, whose conscious looks were the most alarming features in the case, "why do you not speak? If this is a conspiracy, expose it. Where is the wretch that has made this complaint?"

"Here, my lord! Behold me! I am that wretch. I depose—I witness, that Madam Estelle L'Orient is the wife of my son, Monsieur Victoire L'Orient," exclaimed the wicked-looking little French woman, whom Sir Parke now saw and recognized as the quondam governess of his daughter. Beginning to perceive the truth, the baronet turned upon his child and inquired, in a tone of suppressed fury—

"MADAM, answer! What foundation is there for this trumped-up story?"

"*It is true,*" said the wretched Estelle, letting her arms fall by her side, and her chin drop upon her breast, with a 'ook of utter despair.

"Do your duty, officer. Remove your prisoner. Take the *feloness* quickly out of my sight!" cried the baronet, nearly maddened by the shock that had so suddenly hurled his towering pride to the dust

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"Sir Parke! Sir Parke! in mercy, you will not abandon your child in her extremity," pleaded Lord Montressor.

"By all the demons, sir, she is no child of mine! I renounce the wife of Monsieur Victoire L'Orient," cried the baronet, striding away.

"Sir Parke, for the love of God, *look on her!*" prayed Lord Montressor, laying his hand on the arm of the enraged father, and seeking to detain him.

"Release me, sir," thundered the baronet, breaking from his clasp; "My carriage there, sirrahs! Where is Lady Morelle? Let her ladyship be summoned."

"Lady Morelle has fainted, and has been conveyed into the church, my lord," said the Duchess of Graveminster, who had remained standing in an attitude of stern and solemn haughtiness.

Sir Parke left orders for his carriage to come up, and then strode off in the direction of the church.

Lord Montressor sought to reassure the deserted and despairing woman at his side.

"Estelle, dear, suffering one, take comfort; all that a Christian man may do for you, in your extremity, shall be done by me; rely on me; I will never fail you."

"Monsieur, the constable, look at that woman! She has no right to be on the arm of my lord. Do your duty! arrest her!" exclaimed the Frenchman, with vindictive haste

"I fear I must not long delay, my lord," interrupted the policeman, respectfully.

"One moment, officer, if you please. Madam, for the love of the Saviour, sustain this poor, stricken one, until I send a clergyman to attend her. Estelle, dearest, I must, for your own sake, leave you now. I go to send you proper aid. I will see you again at the magistrate's—until then, farewell," said Lord Montressor, gently withdrawing his sustaining arm, and laying her upon the half-repellant, haughty bosom of the Duchess of Graveminster.

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"God forever bless you, my lord. Whatever becomes of poor Estelle, may God forever love and bless you!" murmured the poor girl, waving him adieu.

Lord Montressor hastened into the church and into the vestry, where the Bishop and assistant clergymen were taking off their robes.

"My lord, *what* has happened?" exclaimed the venerable prelate, almost appalled by the pale and haggard countenance and hurried and anxious manner of his lordship; while the two assistant clergymen approached and *looked* the wonder they forbore to speak.

Lord Montressor hastily and briefly related all that had passed; together with the history of the wretched marriage into which Estelle, while a child at school, had been inveigled by the designing governess and her unprincipled son, with the account of the crime, trial, conviction, and transportation of Victoire, the long separation, and the final published report of his loss in the wreck of '*Le Duc D'Anjou*,' three years since.

"The warrant for her arrest was issued by Sir George Bannerman, a bitter enemy of her father. He must have taken the deposition and issued the warrant immediately after the marriage ceremony was concluded. He must have been on the premises for that purpose; for I saw his carriage leaving the church," said his lordship.

"I saw Sir George himself *in* the church," said the Reverend Mr. Oldfield, the elder of the two clergymen.

"*In* the church! then he witnessed the marriage, heard the solemn adjuration at its commencement, might have spoken, stopped the proceedings, and saved this most unhappy of ladies from her present misfortunes! Any but a malignant enemy would have interfered to save her! The case will probably go to trial and come up at the next assizes; but there I am sure an action cannot be successfully sustained against her. And if the course of this

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magistrate has been as I suspect, that fact will be a powerful weapon in the hands of her counsel; and will also go far to hurl Sir George Bannerman himself, from his seat on the bench. Meanwhile, however, the father of Estelle has abandoned her to her fate. I, unhappily, through my late relations to her, am disabled from directly protecting her, my known intervention would be far more likely to injure than to benefit her cause; but you, reverened sirs," continued his lordship, turning toward the two assistant clergymen, "you, Mr. Oldfield and Mr. Trevor, are friends of her family. Your age, holy calling, and position, all constitute the most proper and desirable persons to stand in the relation of protectors to this most unfortunate lady. Go with her to the magistrate's—will you not, sirs?"

The two ministers spoke together for an instant, and then Mr. Oldfield answered for both—

"Most willingly will we attend the lady, my lord; but had we not best object to a hearing before Sir George Bannerman, and demand that she be taken before some other and impartial justice of the peace?"

"Upon the whole, *no* sir; it will make little difference, in the end, and I think it best that this man should be allowed to show his hand," said Lord Montressor; then tearing a leaf from a blank book on the table, writing a check for a thousand pounds on the bank of Exeter, and handing it to Mr. Oldfield, he continued, "Offer bail to any amount for her appearance at court; and then, Mr. Oldfield, I am sure that you will take this poor, shorn lamb to your fold, put her under the care of your excellent lady, and bid her trust God with the result."

"We will certainly do all that can possibly be done for this poor child in her extremity; but—put up your check, my dear lord, for though you are her truest friend, it is not expedient that this good office should emanate from you," said the venerable man.

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"I believe you are right, sir; but what then can be done, since her father abandons her?"

Again the two clergymen conversed apart, and then Mr. Trevor spoke—

"We are not bankers, my lord, it is true; but we can afford to risk some hundred pounds apiece."

"Risk, sir! There will be no risk—do you know Estelle, and imagine that she will not duly present herself for trial?"

"Certainly not—certainly not, my dear lord! The word was unhappily chosen. I meant merely that we might be held *responsible* for so much money."

"Go now, dear sirs, to that poor girl, lest the Duchess of Graveminster think her ermine irremediably tarnished by holding any longer that blighted head upon her bosom. I will meet you at the magistrate's."

"Use my carriage, if no other is provided, Oldfield; I will find a seat in Lord Montressor's, and be in attendance also," said the kind-hearted bishop, whose sympathies had been strongly moved. The reverened gentleman thanked the bishop, and left the church in search of their unhappy charge. On reaching the yard they found that every carriage, with the exception of that of Lord Montressor and that of the Bishop of Exeter, had left the scene. Yes—parents, friends, acquaintances, bridemaids and bridemen, all had fled the place as though the plague were there. The Duchess of Graveminster had departed with the rest.

Estelle was left unsustained, leaning for support against the upright headstone of an humble grave, and guarded by the policeman.

The pitying clergyman approached her, laid his hand upon her bowed head, and gently said—

"Be not so utterly cast down, my child; raise your heart to Him who—when 'all forsook him and fled,' remained unshaken in his trust of his Father."

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But the grief-stunned girl seemed not to hear, or see, or be in any way conscious of the presence of the speaker; she remained wrapped in her white robe and vail, leaning over the tombstone, perfectly motionless, and might have seemed some risen ghost or descended spirit standing at the grave.

"Come, come, my child, look up, give me your hand, let me put you into the carriage; there are some necessary forms to be gone through, and then you are free; and you are to go home with me to Bloomingdale parsonage, for a visit, until your father feels better and comes for you, as he will."

But still she neither moved, nor spoke, and might have seemed less a woman, or a spirit, than some draped marble statue.

"Come, my lamb, come," pursued Mr. Oldfield, taking her cold and passive hand, drawing it within his arm, and leading her away.

Very docilely she suffered herself to be placed in the carriage, when Mr. Oldfield entered and took the seat beside her, and Mr. Trevor followed, and placed himself on the front cushion. The policeman mounted the box beside the coachman, and the carriage was driven off. Almost immediately after, the Bishop of Exeter and Lord Montressor entered the carriage of the latter, and followed on the same road.

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CHAPTER II.

THE ARRESTED BRIDE.

"Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy;
And there she stood, so calm and pale,
That, but her breathing did not fail,
And motion slight of eye and head,
And of her bosom, warranted
That neither sense, nor pulse she lacks,
You might have thought a form of wax
Carved to the very life, was there;
So still she was, so pale, so fair."—*Scott.*

A RAPID drive of an hour's length, brought the party to Horsford, the seat of Sir George Bannerman, knight, the magistrate who had issued the warrant.

A winding avenue led from the highway to the hall.

On arriving before the main entrance, the foremost carriage drove up, and the footman sprang down from behind, opened the door and let down the steps, while the policeman got off the box and stood guard.

Mr. Oldfield alighted first, and handed out Estelle, who, pale as death, with her face still wrapped in her bridal vail, mechanically permitted herself to be conducted by her aged friend up the broad marble stairs leading into the hall.

They were preceded by the policeman, who knocked at the door, which was opened by a footman in attendance; while just within, the fat, gouty-looking porter, sat indolently in his arm-chair, with gold spectacles on his nose, reading the "Times."

The policeman telegraphed to this dignitary, who, without leaving his seat, or raising his eyes from his paper, answered—

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"In the library. Here, John, show this party up."

The footman who had admitted them, now came forward, indicated his forehead with his forefinger, by way of obeisance to the lady and the clergymen, beckoned the officer, and led the way up the broad oaken stairs to a long gallery above, at the extreme end of which was the door of the library, where the preliminary examination was to be conducted. Opening this door, the man announced—

"P'lice an' pris'ners y' honor," admitted them, closed the door, and retired.

The party found themselves in a rich, antique, and handsomely-furnished library, the walls of which were alternately lighted with stained glass gothic windows, and lined with richly wrought and well-filled book-cases.

At the upper extremity of this room, behind a long table, covered with a green cloth, sat Sir George Bannerman; on his right hand was his secretary, and near the end of the table, on the same side, were gathered Madame L'Orient, Monsieur Victoire, and a little French Abbe. Near the magistrate stood Lord Dazzleright.

As the venerable clergyman advanced, supporting his fragile charge, Sir George arose, gravely acknowledged their presence by a slight bow, and sat down again.

The officer preceding the party, laid his warrant before the magistrate, and said—

"Here is the prisoner, your worship," bowed, and retired a step or two.

Sir George took up the document, and while he was looking over it in silence, the library door was once more opened, and—

"His lordship, the Bishop of Exeter, and Lord Montressor, to attend the examination," were announced.

They entered gravely, bowed in silence to Sir George Bannerman, who acknowledged their salutation by a mo-

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mentary lifting of his eyes and a nod, and then took their stand upon the side near Lord Dazzleright.

"Was this *well* done, Sir George Bannerman?" vehemently inquired Mr. Oldfield.

"To what do you allude, sir?" asked the knight, without lifting his glance from the document in his hand.

"I allude to the arrest of the lady."

"Reverend sir, one of your excellent judgment should know that the *law*, no more than the *gospel*, is a 'respecter of persons.'"

"Assuredly not, Sir George! but you were in the church at the time this illegal marriage took place; you heard the solemn adjuration of the Lord Bishop officiating, that—if any man there present knew cause why the contracting parties should not be joined in matrimony, he should then and there declare it. Sir, you sat there, with this unhappy lady's husband by your side, and heard this solemn adjuration, and you did not speak! But speedily after the accomplishment of the act, you issued the warrant for the lady's arrest. Sir George Bannerman, I ask you once more, *was* this act, on the part of a Christian, a gentleman, and a magistrate, *well done?*"

"Sir, a distinguished professor of the orthodox principles of human free agency like yourself, should understand that the *law*, no more than the *gospel*, interferes arbitrarily to prevent crime; that it can only judge and punish; but sir, we lose time; will you have the kindness to stand aside and let me see the prisoner?"

With a deep-drawn sigh, bearing to Heaven an earnest prayer for the despairing one at his side, the good clergyman withdrew a step, and Estelle was left standing unsupported before the green table.

"Madam, will you be kind enough to unvail?" said the magistrate.

Estelle turned aside her vail, revealing a face so deathly

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in its hue that they who beheld it suddenly blanched in sympathy.

"Your name, Madam, is Estelle L'Orient?"

She bowed assent.

The magistrate then took up the warrant for her arrest, read it aloud to her, replaced it on the table, and addressing her, said,

"Estelle L'Orient, you are herein charged, under oath, by Madame Gabrielle L'Orient, here present, with having this day, at the parish church of Hyde, in and during the life of your husband, Victoire L'Orient, now living in these realms, feloniously intermarried with George Charles, Viscount Montressor, said marriage constituting an act of bigamy, against the peace and dignity of the king's majesty, and punishable by transportation, according to the statute in such case made and provided. What have you to say to this charge?"

"Nothing here, sir;—much perhaps hereafter," answered the deep plaintive voice of the accused.

"Sir George Bannerman," said Lord Dazzleright, coming to the side of the lady, "I stand here as the counsel of Lady Montressor, if she will accept my services, and I take exception to the question put to her, as improper."

"Madam, do you retain Lord Dazzleright?" demanded the magistrate.

"I do, sir."

"You are then the counsel of Estelle L'Orient?"

"I am the counsel of Lady Montressor."

"*Ah! my lord! do not breathe that stainless name here!* I have no claim to it! Thank God for this, at least—that whatever happens, I can bring no reproach upon that honored name! for it is not mine! I am poor Estelle L'Orient, and yonder name is really my owner," said the thrilling passionate voice of the lady, as she shuddered and averted her head

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"Hush! hush my child! You must really keep silence, and permit me to conduct this case. I shall deny their charges *ab initio* and *in toto*, as we lawyers say. You are no more the legal wife of yonder vagrant than you are of——well let that pass! You are the Viscountess Montressor."

"*Oh! no, no, no!* great heaven, no! that sacred name—Lord Montressor's spotless name—must be kept holy from the sorrow and shame that is gathering darkly over that of poor Estelle L'Orient."

While this low and hurried conversation was going on between the counsel and his client, the magistrate sat back in his chair, waiting. Seeing them at length silent, he leaned forward and inquired of the counsel if they were ready to hear the charge.

"We are ready," replied Lord Dazzleright.

"Then I will proceed to call the witnesses—Madame Gabrielle L'Orient will please to take the stand."

The small, deep-set, quick, black eyes of the little old French-woman, scintillated with cunning malignity, as she came forward. The oath was duly administered and she commenced her deposition. First, she identified the accused as Estelle, the wife of Victoire L'Orient, and then in polished French but broken English she testified to having witnessed the marriage of her son, Victoire L'Orient, and her pupil, Estelle Morelle, in the church of St. Etienne, at Paris, on the 13th day of November, 18—: and, further, to the fact of the said Victoire and Estelle having lived together as man and wife, for the period of one year, under her roof, at No. 31 Rue St. Genevieve, Paris.

While this witness was giving in her evidence, Lord Dazzleright whispered his client,

"If there is any point in her testimony, to which you take exception, let me know it!"

"The marriage was a private one, and unless I was grossly deceived, she knew nothing of it at the time," mur

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mured Estelle, struggling against the death-like despair that threatened the annihilation of her faculties.

"One moment, if you please," said Lord Dazzleright, as the witness was about to retire from her position, "this alleged marriage is understood to have been a strictly private one—how then did it happen, Madame, that you witnessed it?"

"I suspect the children of their intention. I follow, I pursue, I enter the chapel of St. Etienne. I witness the marriage."

No cross-questioning could drive the woman from this point; but on the contrary, only tended to consolidate and confirm her in her loose-jointed evidence.

The next witness called was the little old French priest, who, having been duly sworn, first identified the accused, and then testified to having both witnessed and assisted at the marriage of Estelle Morelle and Victoire L'Orient, which was solemnized on the 13th of November, 18—, by the Abbe Pierre Leroux, in the church of St. Etienne, Paris.

The cross-questioning of this witness elicited nothing to throw discredit upon his testimony.

The certificate was then exhibited. And the fact of the first marriage seemed established. The next proceeding was to prove the identity of Victoire L'Orient, as the living husband, and consequently as the legal obstacle to the second nuptial. This was easily done by the testimony of the mother and the priest. The next and final fact to establish, on the part of the prosecution, was that of the second and so called felonious marriage, that day celebrated at the parish church of Hyde. This was formally proved by the testimony of the same witnesses.

Then Lord Dazzleright, with a smile of encouragement, stooped and spoke aside to his client.

"Reassure yourself, Lady Montressor! This was from first to last a series of conspiracies; I shall easily overthrow

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them with their own weapons; hoist these engineers with their own petard——"

Then turning to the magistrate, his smile of benevolence changed to one of flashing scorn, as he said,—

"We might commence, your worship, by contesting the legality of these proceedings, from the moment of the issuing of the warrant, in itself informal, as not containing the name of the accused, which is not Estelle L'Orient, but Estelle Viscountess Montressor. But we choose to rest our defense, not upon a mere verbal form, but on the deepest and firmest foundations of justice and truth. We shall therefore commence by denying *ab initio* and *in toto* the validity of the alleged marriage, said to have taken place in the chapel of St. Etienne, in the city of Paris, showing the same to have been a felonious act, the result of a conspiracy, in which my client was not principal or party, but victim—a crime punishable by the statute laws of France with fine and imprisonment. I shall show that, dating from the edict of the 14*th of Henry II.*, the statute laws of France forbid the marriage of a minor without the knowledge and consent of her parents or guardians, and vacate such marriage, so contracted, as illegal, invalid, and of none effect."*

It is not our intention to follow the "learned counsel"

* In the old chronicle of the Kings of France from Pharamond to Henri Quatre, written by the Sieur de Mezeral, occurs this paragraph, which is curious as the origin of the statute affecting the marriage of minors in France. The date is 1557 of our Lord, and 10 of the reign of Henry IV.

"One cannot too often, or in too large characters, make mention of a couple of Edicts which were made this year: The one, to retrench the abuses of Clandestine Marriage, vacated all Marriages made by the Children of any Family without the consent of their Father and Mother, unless the Sons when they contracted were above Thirty years of Age and the Daughters above Five and Twenty. And to put the stronger curb on the amorous fancies of young, giddy People, they added the penalty of Disinheritance. The particular Interest of the Constable (De Montmorenci) procured this Edict. His eldest son had engaged himself with the Damoiselle De Pienne, a very beautiful Woman and of a good House, by verbal Contract: the Father desired to disengage him from her, to match him with the King's natural daughter, the Widow of Horace Farnese."

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minutely through all his argument, in which he displayed much zeal, legal lore, ingenuity and tact, and by which he temporarily effected, in the feelings and sentiments of all his hearers, with the exception of the prosecuting party, a powerful revulsion in favor of the accused. He exposed without mercy all the intriguing arts by which this designing French governess and her unprincipled son had conspired to inveigle their pupil, then a mere child, into a clandestine marriage, by which they hoped eventually to enjoy her immense wealth. He dwelt upon the moral turpitude of that treacherous teacher in having thus betrayed the sacred trust reposed in her by the parents of the child confided to her care. He said that the criminal arts of this intriguing mother and son should avail them nothing, either in shape of profit or vengeance. And he concluded by concentrating an immense mass of law, testimony and precedence upon the point that this *quasi* marriage into which they had conspired to entrap their pupil, was, without the knowledge and consent of the parents or guardians of the child-bride, null, void, invalid, and therefore could not form a legal obstacle to the validity of the real and authorized marriage that day solemnized at the parish church at Hyde. He then required the discharge of his client from custody, and sat down.

Sir George Bannerman acknowledged the conclusion of his argument by a nod, and turned his face toward the witnesses for the prosecution as if to express himself ready to hear any thing they might have to advance against this. The prosecuting party had no counsel, but in the absence of a better lawyer, Madame L'Orient proved in her own person, despite her sex and her broken English, an "indifferent good," or at least very shrewd advocate. And it was the shrill voice of the little yellow, shriveled, and bead eyed old French woman, that replied to the polished Lord Dazzleright.

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She prayed Monsieur the Magistrate to remind himself that the *statement* that Mademoiselle Estelle Morelle had been married to Monsieur Victoire L'Orient, without the knowledge and consent of her parents, was only an *assumption* which required proof, while on the contrary, the *fact* that this marriage between Monsieur Victoire and Mademoiselle Estelle had been celebrated with the knowledge and consent, and in the presence of Mademoiselle's *guardian*, was already proved, was established, was unquestioned; for that she herself, Madame Gabrielle L'Orient, in her capacity of governess and teacher, had borne the relation of guardian to Mademoiselle Morelle. And as guardian of Mademoiselle, her presence at the marriage of Mademoiselle was all that was needed to make that marriage a legal transaction.

Having given this testimony, the vindictive little woman —her black eyes scintillating in triumph—sat down.

Lord Dazzleright arose and scornfully disclaimed the protestations of Madame L'Orient, utterly denying that her office of teacher could have invested her, for a moment, with the rights of legal guardianship over her pupil.

Madame replied that she was not only teacher, but sole custodian, governess and guardian of Mademoiselle for many years.

Here commenced a discussion upon this subject, ended at last by the magistrate, whom it was easy to suspect of a leaning on the side of the prosecution, and who now said—

"This particular point is a matter for the adjudication of their lordships the judges at the assizes. Has the defense any thing further to urge?"

"Yes—for though you choose to consider the illegality of the first marriage a questionable matter—nay, though you should decide to hold it a legal and binding transaction, yet—we have much to advance, why my client should not be held to answer to the grave charges upon which she

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stands before your worship. The English law, as also the law of all Christian nations, very righteously constitutes the *intention* the vital part of the crime; now that my client had not the faintest shadow of *intention* or purpose to violate the statute by her second, and as we hold it to be, her *only* real marriage—is easy of proof. Two years ago there was a published account of the death of this man, upon the occasion of the wreck of the *Duc D'Anjou.* This account was translated from the *Courrier de France* into the daily Times, a copy of which I have just received from Lord Montressor, and have the honor of laying before your worship," said Lord Dazzleright, drawing the paper from his pocket and placing it upon the table before the magistrate, who took it up and read, while the advocate proceeded—

"My client saw this announcement, and believing herself to be the legal widow of this man, retired from society and remained in seclusion some eighteen months; at the end of which time only, she accepted the addresses of Lord Montressor, to whom she was this morning espoused as you have learned."

"But Monsieur the Magistrate! but Monsieur! I pen—I indite—I write much—many letters to Madame Victoire L'Orient! I advise—I inform her of the life of my son, her husband!" here vehemently interrupted the mercurial little Frenchwoman.

"Madame, you are disorderly and will consult your best interests by being quiet," said the magistrate. Then addressing the counsel for the defense, he said—"This point also is one for the adjudgment of their lordships."

There was a short pause, at the end of which the magistrate inquired—

"Has the defense any thing further to advance?"

"The defense has nothing further to advance *here* and *now.*" replied Lord Dazzleright, with a peculiar emphasis.

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"Then, Madam," said the magistrate, addressing Estelle, "I consider this a case for court, and I shall therefore bind you over for trial to answer the charge of bigamy, at the next assizes to be holden at the city of Exeter."

The pale and drooping girl who had remained all this time with her face bowed and hidden upon her hands in the folds of her bridal vail, now raised her eyes in wild affright, looking so much like an amazed and terrified child in the grasp of some horrible power, that the good clergyman, Mr. Oldfield, hastened to her side and stooped to say—

"It is but a form, my child. No action can be successfully sustained against you. Trust in God, and take courage."

"Have you bail?" inquired Sir George Bannerman, who had just been giving some private directions to his secretary.

Estelle shook her head—poor girl, she did not fairly understand the purport of the question.

"Lady Montressor *has* bail, your worship. The Reverend Mr. Oldfield and the Reverend Mr. Trevor stand ready to enter into a recognizance with her, or rather with her husband, Lord Montressor, for her appearance at court," said Lord Dazzleright.

The magistrate turned to direct his secretary to fill out the proper forms. And while that functionary was busily scribbling, Estelle turned to Lord Dazzleright pleading,

"For the love of the Saviour, my lord! do not, oh! do not continue to drag the spotless name of Montressor through the mire of my misery! I would rather,—oh! far rather, that conviction should come with all its train of horrors for me, than that I should be saved, at the expense of one speck upon that stainless name."

Without replying to her prayer, the advocate, turning toward Lord Montressor, said—

"Will your lordship be so good as to come and speak to this lady? you may be able to bring her to reason"

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Lord Montressor, who had heard or divined the purport of Estelle's plaintive petition, and who desired nothing more than the opportunity of reassuring her, now came to her side and said,

"Estelle, my beloved, look up! I hold you as my dear and honored wife, in whose cause it is both my duty and inclination to risk, if needed, life and fortune, and sacred honor. Estelle, beloved! you know that Baron Dazzleright is at this time esteemed the most eminent lawyer in the kingdom. His legal opinion is considered of the very first importance. He holds the secret marriage into which you, as an infant, were entrapped, ten years since, to be perfectly void; and, on the other hand, the marriage solemnized between us this day, to be perfectly valid. His opinion upon the validity of our marriage, supported by the authorities he adduces, and the developments of the last two hours, has decided my course. I stand upon the legality of the ceremony this day performed in the church of Hyde; I claim the rights of a husband to protect and shelter you; and here pledge my life if needful, my fortune, my umblemished name and sacred honor to bear you blameless through the severe ordeal. Therefore, *Lady Montressor*, do not again seek to cast off the support that is most righteously your own, nor the honorable name that does not deserve repudiation at your hands. Remember, that it is your *husband* who requires this of you!"

Lord Montressor spoke with an air of beautifully blended deference, tenderness, and dignity, almost impossible to resist.

Lord Dazzleright's fine face beamed with sympathetic admiration—and clasping the hand of the noble speaker, he said—

"God bless you, Lord Montressor, for you are very right! and if there is a man—peer, or prince—in the empire who could take, unquestioned, the position that you now

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take and discharge with delicacy and discretion, its difficult duties, that man is your lordship. God bless you?"

But all this while Estelle, with her clasped hands hanging down, her head drooped upon her breast, and her eyes lowered to the ground, remained in mournful silence. Nor did she once change her position, or look up, or speak, until the magistrate called the two sureties to sign the recognizance that was now ready. The two clergymen advanced to the table. Lord Dazzleright also followed, and she was left standing alone, or guarded, as it were, by Lord Montressor.

"Has my Stella no word or glance for me?" he inquired.

"Oh! my Lord—my lord—do you not *know* then that poor Estelle's soul is at your feet, in acknowledgment of your matchless constancy! But, Lord Montressor, it must not be as you have said. I may not lean upon your noble strength, nor bear your honored name, and will not, my lord—*will not*," said Estelle, with mournful dignity.

"Does my dearest Stella, my gentle *bride*,—with all her graces,—lack the lovely grace of submission?"

"Poor Estelle, your *servant*, my lord, possesses with all her faults and weaknesses, the capacity and strength to suffer alone, alone! rather than drag one whom she honors down to share her degradation."

"Your signature is wanted to this document, madam," said Sir George Bannerman, addressing the prisoner.

"Remain here, dear Estelle. I shall sign that instrument in your behalf," said Lord Montressor, leaving her side and advancing to the table.

"Lord Montressor will enter into a recognizance with Messieurs Oldfield and Trevor, on the part of his wife," said Baron Dazzleright.

"It will not do. The prisoner must sign for herself," said the magistrate.

"Be it so, then. Estelle—Lady Montressor—if you have

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any regard for me, sign only the name that I have this day bestowed upon you," whispered Lord Montressor, as he led her forward to the table.

"Lady Montressor, I add my voice to his lordship's, and do beseech you, for the sake of all who love you, to comply," said the Baron.

Estelle turned upon Lord Montressor a smile, full of holy self-renunciation, took the pen, and with a firm hand signed the paper.

Lord Montressor, Lord Dazzleright, and the two clergymen bent eagerly forward to read the signature. It was —ESTELLE L'ORIENT.

"Oh, child, child! Why have you written thus?" questioned Lord Montressor, with a look of distress.

"This girl will ruin her own cause," said Lord Dazzleright, in a tone of vexation.

"Yes, my lords, she *will* ruin her own cause rather than insure it at the expense of the noble and the good. I am poor, lost Estelle, wife of Victoire L'Orient, and have not the slightest claim even upon the Viscount Montressor's countenance—to say nothing of his noble name."

"We will see about that, my fair fanatic," said the Baron.

As it was now very late in the afternoon, and the setting sun was shining aslant the sombre library wall, and as Sir George Bannerman announced the sitting at end, and betrayed symptoms of impatience to be gone, the parties,—both prosecutors and defendants, prepared to retire.

"You will go with me to Bloomingdale, my child, and remain as long as your friends can spare you. Mrs. Oldfield will be very—ahem!—will do every thing she possibly can to prove her affection and respect for you, and to make your sojourn in our humble home as comfortable and agreeable as circumstances will admit, my dear," said old Mr. Oldfield to his protege.

"We thank you very sincerely for your offered hospi-

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tality, reverend sir; but since taking legal advice my plans are again changed—we shall adhere to the first arrangement, which was, that Lady Montressor and myself should go down to Dorset and spend a month at our castle of Montressor," said the Viscount, with calm emphasis.

"Your lordship doubtless best knows the just and proper grounds of your action," said the venerable man, bowing gravely, but looking, withal, so uneasy, that Lord Montressor beckoned the baron to his side, and said:

"Lord Dazzleright, will you be good enough to inform these gentlemen whom you consider to be the legal protector of this lady?"

"Unquestionably, reverend sirs, I hold the only legal protector and proper custodian of this lady to be her husband, the Lord Viscount Montressor."

"But," said the old clergymen, hesitatingly, "there is *another* who claims that relation to this lady, and whose claims the magistrate, however unjustly, certainly favors."

"And whose claims to any thing else but transportation will certainly be set aside by the courts," said the baron.

"But in the mean time, for the lady's own sake, had she not better remain with me, or some other friend, until the decision of the courts has confirmed her position?" pleaded Mr. Oldfield.

"Decidedly not, sir; it would argue a doubt of her position—a position upon the assuredness and stability of which I am willing to stake my reputation. As the legal adviser of Lady Montressor, I certainly counsel her ladyship to place herself under the powerful protection of her husband, and accompany him to Montressor Castle, to pass the time until the meeting of the Judges."

"Come, my love, you hear what the baron says. It is getting late. Take leave of your friends, and permit me to hand you into the carriage which waits, and drive to your father's house, where we will pass the night, and

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"once to-morrow morning we will set out for Dorset," said Lord Montressor, who was very anxious to remove his bride from the scene.

"My father! Ah, Lord Montressor, do you deem that in all respects, Sir Parke Morelle resembles *you!*" My father will never look upon my face again, were that look needed to save my soul alive. Nay, best and most honored my lord, I *dare* not cross my father's threshold, and I *will* not cross my lord's. If ever a Lady Montressor sets foot within Montressor Castle, she will not first have borne the branded name of Estelle L'Orient. Farewell, my lord. I repeat now, what I said before, whatever may finally become of poor Estelle, may God forever bless and love you, Lord Montressor," she said, bowing her forehead for a moment upon his hand that she had clasped between her own; and then releasing it, and turning away, she addressed the old minister, saying gently:

"I am at your disposal, Mr. Oldfield, if indeed, you still offer the shelter of your roof to one so lost as I am."

"Gladly, my child, will I receive you; and let me tell you, Lady Montressor——"

"Ah, *you* also, Mr. Oldfield; you will not spare my lord's name," interrupted Estelle.

"I very much suspect that it is your legal name, Lady Montressor. I have the greatest confidence in the opinions of Lord Dazzleright upon all *legal* questions, though I am not sure I would be guided by his judgment in religious questions. Thus I think his opinion upon the validity of your marriage is likely to be quite right, while his advice to you, (founded upon that opinion), that you should accompany Lord Montressor to his castle in Dorset, there to abide the action of the court, I consider to be erroneous. Your own instincts, by the grace of God, have been a better guide. It is fitting that you should remain with Mrs. Oldfield, unless your parents claim you from us," whispered the

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venerable man, drawing the arm of his protege within his own, and preparing to leave the room.

But Lord Montressor, who had remained a few minutes in mournful silence now spoke:

"Estelle, Lady Montressor, my wife, I have not said 'farewell,' and I disclaim your right thus to withdraw yourself from my lawful protection."

"Lord Montressor, your poor servant, Estelle, who would lay down her life to serve your lordship, will not even at *your* command, take one step to compromise or injure you! Once more, farewell, my lord. And our God forever love and bless you;" and with gentle firmness, Estelle lowered her vail and turned away.

Still Lord Montressor would have detained and expostulated with her, had not the Bishop of Exeter here come up and reasoned with his lordship.

"Lady Montressor does well. I have no doubt that Lord Dazzleright is *legally correct*, but he is *morally wrong*. I have no doubt that the marriage this day solemnized at Hyde is perfectly valid and indissoluble; but inasmuch as its validity is contested and remains to be confirmed by the action of the court, I declare it my opinion as a Christian minister that Lady Montressor is *religiously correct* in withdrawing herself from the society of your lordship until such time as the court has adjudged her position; and that any other course would expose her ladyship to much censure."

"I see, now, that you are entirely right, my Lord Bishop. Our wishes often blind us to what is expedient as well as to what is right. Although, indeed, I wished chiefly to consult her ladyship's comfort and interests. I thank you, sir, that you have placed this subject in its proper light before me," said Lord Montressor, frankly Then going up to the bride, he said:

"Estelle, love, you go now with my full consent and

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approbation. Mr. Oldfield, it is I, her husband, who commits *Lady Montressor* to your care," he concluded, laying a marked emphasis upon the title with which he wished to invest her

"Your lordship does well. And Lady Montressor shall receive the best possible care and attention while she sojourns under our humble roof," replied the aged clergyman. And, bowing to the group, he led his charge from the library, through the long passage, down the broad stairs, across the wide hall to the entrance door, and thence down the steps to the carriage in which he placed her.

Meanwhile, Madame L' Orient, Victoire, and the little fat Abbe, chattering like a trio of mammoth magpies, had got into their chaise and driven off.

Lord Montressor, Lord Dazzleright and the Bishop of Exeter, now came down the steps, entered the carriage of the viscount, and took the road to Hyde.

Mr. Trevor came out, and joined Mr. Oldfield and Lady Montressor, and their carriage was ordered to drive to Bloomfield.

CHAPTER III.

THE WORLD.

"'Tis an atrocious world!"—*Bulwer.*

THE news of the arrest of a bride at the altar, upon one of the gravest charges, and that bride, the beautiful and gifted Estelle Morelle, the star of fashion, the patroness of art and literature, the only daughter and heiress of the oldest and wealthiest baronet in the West of England, and the wife of one of the most distinguished among the young

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rising members of the house of Peers—fell like a thunderbolt upon the world, and spread like a conflagration through society. The story was everywhere received with incredulous amazement. The very enormity of the offense charged upon one so high and pure, stupefied belief. Even the reporters and "item" hunters of the press, feared, for a time, to deal directly with the question; and compromised the matter by obscure hints, and initials, instead of proper names. The most daring "sensationists" among the country editors were held in check, not only by the judicious limitation of the *license* of the press which exists in England, but also by deep respect for, and perhaps awe of the principal parties concerned. For the characters and influence of Sir Park Morelle and of the Viscount Montressor were not only paramount in their respective counties of Devon and Dorset, but superior throughout the West of England.

The affair was canvassed with never flagging interest by people of every rank in society.

Upon the evening of the arrest, the large kitchen of the "Morelle Arms," the Inn at Hyde, where small farmers, artizans and laborers most did "congregate," was the scene of a considerable excitement upon the subject.

Along on benches placed each side a strong oaken table, sat perhaps a dozen rough-looking countrymen, clad in frieze coats or in smock frocks, and having clay pipes between their lips, and pewter pots of foaming "arf-'n-arf' before them. In an arm-chair at the head of the table, sat John Oates the baker, like a self-installed moderator of the feast, while at the foot, on an oaken stool, was perched Peter Barktree, under-gamekeeper from Horsford.

The fat little landlady was ever bustling in and out, between the kitchen and the adjoining bar, pausing now and then to catch a word of fresh news upon the all-engrossing subject which they were discussing with so much zest.

"Wot's been done with un?" inquired Bob Sounds, the

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well-digger, of his next neighbor, Peter Barktree, who having come in from Horsford, might be expected to know something satisfactory.

"Ay mon, wot's been done with un?" echoed all the others.

"*Oie* dunnoa. How should *Oie* know, only wot Bill Moines sayt? Bill Moines as works on the Yew-tree farrum at Horsford telled *Oie* how zhe was zent off to the county jail. But *Oie* dunnoa, how zhould *Oie* knoa?" replied this specimen of either stupefaction or caution—it was hard to tell which.

"Humph! how zhould Bill Moines knoa, an he did wurruk on the Horsford farrum?" queried a doubter.

"*Oie* dunnoa. He wur up to the great house and saw the carridges drive off mebbe; but I dunnoa; how zhould *Oie* knoa?"

"Bill Moines loied, and Peter Barktree nows nowt on it. John Howe, the constable, toolde me as his worship had sent un off with his ruverence Muster Oldfield to stay tull the triall," said the baker from the head of the table; and having taken the pipe quite out of his mouth to deliver this judgment, he now to save time immediately replaced it and smoked the faster.

"Wot time will the trial be!—Quardar Zezzions!"

"Noo, mon, (puff,) its a piece of wurruk for his ludship, (puff, puff,) and wull coome before the Zizes, (puff, puff, puff,) and they will be open next week," replied the competent baker and dictator, smoking vigorously between his oracular words.

"And wot will they do with zhe!"

"Saying it goo agin un, zend un to the tre'd'll."*

"Noo they wull not, nuther. It's boogmy wot they zent Tom Sawyers acroos the water for. And they wull zend

* Treadmill.

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un to Bootany Bay coolonies," said an artizan who had not before spoken.

"Oy, but they wull ne'er do the loike of that to zhe, Tom."

"And whoy zhouldn't they do it to zhe as well as to another, Bill Stiggins, if zhe *be* hoigh quality? Boogmy's boogmy the wurruld over; and wot's boogmy fur poor folk is boogmy for quality folk, and noa summat else with a foiner name; and wot's Boot'ny Bay for poor folk, zhould be Boot'ny Bay for quality folk, and noa soome foiner place loike Lunnun town," persisted this determined radical.

"Oy, oy, Tom! zo we zay. Wot's law for the poor zhould be law for the quality. A health to Tom Stallins! Here, Mother Higgins, more ale! Wot's Boot'ny Bay for poor Tom Sawyers, zhoold be Boot'ny Bay for—"

"Hold your blaspheming tongues of ye! Botany Bay, indeed! They'd never send the likes of her ladyship to prison for one minute, no matter what she was left to her own devises to do, let alone Botany Bay. Is her blessed ladyship, Tom Sawyers, ye brutes? Shame on ye! And she the sweetest angel as ever went without wings. Shame on ye! And she educating all yer children, and clothing all yer old mothers, and lifting half the burden of life from your good-for-naught shoulders ever since she came home these ten years back—shame on ye! I say again, ye great, stupid, unfeeling brute beasts! to take her sweet name on yer lips!" exclaimed the little landlady, unable longer to repress her indignation at hearing her "angel's" calamity thus freely discussed, and therefore quite ready to sacrifice her interests to her feelings, and offend every guest in her kitchen.

"Coom, coom, Mother Higgins, dooant tnee get hoigh with us. Give us zoome more ale," replied the baker, holding his pewter pot up for replenishment.

"Well, then, keep a civil tongue in yer heads, and know

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who ye'd be talking about, ye stupid loons, ye! That French frog-eater as the Evil One has sot on to pretend to her dear ladyship, has no more right to lift his eye to *her* than old Bony has to the crown of England." Speaking of "Bony" probably suggested battle, for the honest woman went on to say, "And more betoken, they do tell me how the Frenchman stole her from a boarding-school while she was a child; and if so be he should get her *now*, it would cause a war with France."

"Chut, dame; wot do thee knoa aboot politics and war? and whoy should 's majesty go to war aboot two yoong uns as doant know their own moinds? Speak wot thee knows on, dame," said Tom Stallins.

"Oy, but the dame be roight! Master Stubbins, his ludship's oon mon, says how his ludship, Lud Muntresser, do stick to it as the Frenchman had noo roight to coome here giving trooble; and his ludship wull stand by the lady, een noo that her oon fayther and moother hev cast un off, and more zhame for um," said Mr. Stiggins.

"Ay will he, I'll warrant ye! And a right noble gentleman he is," exclaimed the landlady.

"Zo he is! zo he is! and here's to Lud Muntrussor!" agreed the baker, tossing off the foaming bumper just placed in his hand by the dame. And similar discussions to this were taking place in every ale-house, tap-room, and tavern-kitchen in the three counties, as far as the news had flown.

The morning after the preliminary examination, the elegant boudoir of Lady Bannerman was half-filled with morning callers, who had "just happened in" to hear a true, authentic report from first quarters of this most wonderful of scandals. Ladies whose charms had long been thrown in the shade by the peerless beauty and genius of Estelle Morelle, now canvassed without mercy her sudden fall.

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"Sweet Providence, what a coming down! What a thunderbolt to the whole family! Arrested at the altar upon a charge of ——! Was such a thing ever heard of!" exclaimed the Honorable Mrs. Howard Kennaugh.

"Hush-sh! my dearest love; pray do not specify the offense in the presence of my daughters—the dear girls are so unsophisticated—their minds are so pu-err, I am perhaps just a little prudish in speaking before them," cooed Lady Bannerman.

"What a crushing blow to Sir Parke's pride," said Lady Mary Monson.

"What a shock to Montressor," drawled Mrs. Bute Trevor.

"But what a life of deception that creature must have led, to have deceived her parents and her betrothed so effectually," said Mrs. Howard Kennaugh.

"And what could she have *expected* other than, sooner or later, just such a denouement as the present?" inquired Lady Monson.

"Oh, you see, my dear, the fellow was in a foreign prison; she never expected him to get free; and when he returned so very inopportunely, why she affected to have believed him dead," explained Lady Bannerman.

"Oh, the unprincipled wretch! What a happy thing for you and your sweet daughters, my dear Lady Bannerman, that you were never on visiting terms with the family at the Hall, and will not have the awkwardness of breaking with them as some of us shall," said Mrs. Bute Trevor.

"A very happy circumstance, indeed, I assure you; I esteem it, madam," returned her deceitful ladyship, who, even at that darkest moment, would have given the largest diamond in her parure to be placed on the dinner list of Lady Morelle, and deemed the honor cheaply purchased.

"They say that Miss Morelle, Madame L'Orient, or Lady Montressor, whichever she may properly be named, for

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really one does scarcely know how to choose among her various *aliases*, has been cast off by her parents. What do you think of it, Mrs. Kennaugh?" asked Mrs. Bute Trevor.

"Oh, dear, I think it no wonder! she had deceived them so deeply, and shocked them so dreadfully! If they could only cast off the cleaving dishonor with the daughter, it were better."

"Ah, but that will *cling;* I wonder if they will be visited by any one?" suggested Lady Monson.

"Really, it is impossible to say. As far as our family are concerned, if we had ever been on visiting terms with them, it would be out of the question for us to continue an acquaintance with a set so seriously compromised," said Lady Bannerman.

"Gracious Heaven, only to reflect upon it! One can scarcely realize such horrors," said Mrs. Howard Kennaugh.

"When does the trial come on?" inquired Mrs. Bute Trevor.

"As soon as the Easter Assizes are open at Exeter. The case will come up before the new judge, Sir James Allan Parke."

"Sir James Allan Parke, my dear? And he is the new judge! Why, is he not a relative of Sir Parke Morelle? Maternal uncle, or cousin, or something of the sort? It will be a strange beginning to have to try his own relative, will it not?"

"That trial will be a solemn farce, of course; nobody expects conviction for *her*."

"But, just Heaven, will the acquittal of the court remove the dishonor that will attach to herself and all her family?"

"Of course it cannot restore her to the social position that she has forfeited."

"To think of Estelle Morelle in the prisoner's dock!" exclaimed Mrs. Howard Kennaugh, who seemed to have

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an attraction toward the most painful and humiliating points of the case.

"Yes! and then if she *should* happen to be convicted," suggested Lady Bannerman.

"What would be done with her?"

"She would be sent to the convict colonies. It is a transportable offense."

"Ugh! I suppose in that case her parents would never show their faces in England again."

"They will go abroad in *any* case, of course. For my part, I think that inasmuch as the girl has been arraigned, she had just as well be condemned. It can make but little difference, and to ship her to Australia will end the difficulty, and be a sort of way of providing for her. Her parents are going East, and Lord Montressor has applied for an Ambassorship to America."

"Mamma, dear, do you know I think *that must* be a mistake? For I heard from Mrs. Burgess, the niece of the Bishop of Exeter, that his lordship intended to assert and stand upon the legality of his marriage, and to sustain his lady," said Miss Bannerman, upon whom all eyes were now turned in astonishment at this annunciation.

"Louise, my dear, we must not believe half that we hear."

"But, dearest mamma, his lordship really *did* place her under the protection of Mr. Oldfield to await the event of the trial."

"Ridiculous, my love. His lordship had nothing to do with it; Mr. Oldfield took the poor lost creature into his house as an act of Christian charity. You know, my sweet, that a *clergyman* can do any thing of that sort, which no one else could dare to do; because his holy cloth will 'cover a multitude of sins'—*of others.*"

"But, dearest mamma, Mrs. Burgess told me that it was *all* his lordship's doings, and that in placing her under the

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protection of Mr. Oldfield, he gave him and his family to understand that she must be addressed only by the name and title that he had bestowed upon her, and that he chose to consider her own."

"Perfectly preposterous, my darling girl! a peer of Lord Montressor's exalted rank compromise himself with a questionable woman? Perfectly preposterous!"

"But, mamma dear, he is said to be devotedly attached to her!"

"Tut, tut, tut, my best Louisa, pray do not be absurd! Lord Montressor attached to *her* in view of all that is past, and present, and to come? Preposterous! Perfectly preposterous!"

And — "Preposterous! Perfectly preposterous!" was echoed by all the ladies present.

And this scene was but a type of a score of other such scenes then transpiring in the boudoirs and drawing-rooms of Devon, Dorset, and Somerset, where this subject was discussed as far as the news had spread. But, notwithstanding the ladies had characterized the idea as "preposterous," the fact was now forced upon their convictions, that Lord Montressor did mean to spread the ægis of his powerful name and protection over Estelle during her terrible ordeal.

It became known, as every thing even of the most secret nature does, in some mysterious manner, that Lord Montressor had called upon Sir Parke Morelle in behalf of his daughter.

Lord Montressor in fact suffered one night to pass, during which he hoped Sir Parke Morelle might recover from the first madness of rage into which he had been thrown by this terrible shock to his pride and affection, and then his Lordship had called at Hyde Hall and requested a private audience with the Baronet. He was shown into the superb

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library where he found Sir Parke reclining in a luxurious arm-chair with a reading stand beside him, and engaged in reading, or in pretending to do so.

Lord Montressor advanced with serene gravity, offering his hand.

Sir Parke arose to welcome him, and stood, slightly bent, trembling and leaning for support with one hand upon the chair. The Baronet had aged twenty years in less than twenty hours.

"Good-morning, Sir Parke."

"Good-morning, my lord. Pray be seated."

Lord Montressor waived his hand, nodded, took the indicated chair, and when Sir Parke Morelle had resumed his seat, said,—

"I called this morning, Sir Parke, believing that you would be pleased to hear favorable news relating to Lady Montressor."

The Baronet's face suddenly blanched, his lips worked, his brow gathered, but his over-mastering pride soon controlled every betrayal of emotion, and he inquired, coolly—

"News relating to——*whom*, my lord?"

"To your daughter, sir."

"Your Lordship labors under some serious mistake. *I have no daughter*," said the Baronet, sternly.

"No daughter? That is very sorrowful, if true; you lately gloried in the loveliest daughter in all Devon."

"We will not speak of her, if you please, my lord," said the baronet haughtily.

"Be it so, I will drop the subject of *your daughter;* but will you, sir, on your part, be so courteous as to permit me to speak for a few moments of, *my wife*?"

"I was not aware, Lord Montressor, that you *had* a wife."

"Then I have the honor of informing you of that fact. Yes, sir, I have the loveliest wife, as *you* had the loveliest

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daughter, in all Devon; I have not lost her; and it is of *her* that I come here to talk."

"My lord! with all deference to your lordship, I must inform you that *I* do not *know* Lady Montressor; nor is it convenient just at present to form her ladyship's acquaintance. We are about to leave England for some time, my lord."

"Sir Parke!" said Lord Montressor, very gravely, "let us leave this unworthy word-fencing, and talk of this matter as Christian *men* should discuss it—shall we not?"

The baronet's countenance was working again; he sought to control its emotions; he sought to repress the feelings that were swelling in his bosom; he was "very vilely proud," but his pride was scarcely proof against the earnest goodness of Lord Montressor's nature.

His lordship saw this advantage and pursued it.

"If you will exercise the moral heroism of looking this dark matter steadily in the face, you will understand it better—summon patience and strength, while I tell you as much, and no more than it is requisite you should know, of the present position of affairs relating to—my wife."

Then Lord Montressor commenced, and while the baronet listened with his chin upon his breast, and his hand thrust into his bosom, told with all possible delicacy what had passed, and concluded by saying—

"Thus the law and the testimony, as understood by the most eminent barrister in the kingdom, hold Estelle to have been, while yet an infant, the victim of a conspiracy, and entirely set aside the *quasi* marriage of the child, in favor of the real marriage of the woman. Therefore, sir, I shall use the power with which the law undoubtedly invests me to protect and defend Estelle in her present straits, and when these shall be safely past, leaving the conduct of her future life to be decided by her own conscience and moral free agency."

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Leaning his head upon his thin worn hand, Sir Parke turned his glance wistfully upon the face of Lord Montressor. His lordship's calm, self-possessed independence of thought and action amazed this world-worshiper. But Sir Parke's thoughts, affections, and activities revolved in a very contracted orbit—from pride to self-interest, and from self-interest around again to pride—and as neither of these passions could in any degree be gratified by any sort of relations with Estelle, he judging the motives of others by his own, could not at all understand the grounds of Lord Montressor's action. But then the humanity, liberality and independence of Lord Montressor had often suggested the suspicion to the baronet that his lordship was a little wrong-headed upon some subjects, and that was the only way, he thought, to explain his present otherwise inexplicable conduct. When Lord Montressor paused, he spoke, though somewhat off the point.

"Since we *are* discussing this subject, which you have rather ungenerously forced upon me, my lord, I must use the opportunity afforded me of assuring your lordship that at the time of your betrothal to Miss Morelle, neither Lady Morelle nor myself had the slightest grounds for suspicion that there had existed on the side of the young lady, a previous entanglement."

"I am assured of that, Sir Parke; though I myself had been duly advised of all this by Estelle, who would have placed a like confidence in her father had she dared."

As much as Sir Parke was surprised by this avowal, he was much too guarded to permit his astonishment to appear; while Lord Montressor proceeded to say:—

"But, this is not the point, sir; what I wished to inquire is whether—now that you are made acquainted with the position of affairs—you will assist me in sustaining Estelle." There was a pause. For a few minutes pride and affection had a mighty struggle in the bosom of the Baronet, though

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no one could have guessed it from his calm exterior, and then he replied, slowly :—

"Assuredly not, my lord. You, from the infatuation of passion, and Mr. Oldfield, from Christian charity, may unite to protect and defend her; and the literal construction of the statute may save her from the ultimate consequences of her folly, but Estelle has fallen, and no fallen woman must dare to call me father, or look to me for aid and countenance."

An indignant rejoinder rose to Lord Montressor's lips; he was tempted to inquire of him by whose culpable neglect it was that the child of seven years had been left to grow up under the sole charge of an unprincipled and intriguing French governess, who ended by entrapping and nearly destroying her pupil; to ascribe all the wretchedness that had ensued to his own failure in parental duty, and to hurl the charge of dishonor back into the teeth of the cold, hard, haughty man who had made it; but "He who ruleth his own spirit is mightier than he who taketh a city," and Lord Montressor forbore by angry words to widen the breach between father and daughter.

"God give you a more humane heart, Sir Parke," he said "When do you leave England?"

"Within ten days," answered the baronet.

"He wishes to escape before the opening of the Assizes. Well, well, be it so! only with augmented earnestness let me pray God to purify my heart from every earthly passion, and every selfish motive, that I may be the fitter champion of His poor child, whose earthly father and mother have forsaken her," thought Lord Montressor. Then he inquired—since they were so soon to leave England—whether he might not be permitted to pay his respects to Lady Morelle.

But the baronet prayed that he would excuse her lady

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ship, who had not yet recovered the severe shock her nerves had sustained in this affair.

Lord Montressor then left his compliments and best wishes for Lady Morelle, and arose and took leave.

Worldly pride was the governing passion of Sir Parke and Lady Morelle. Just so long as their only daughter had been an object of pride to them, they had idolized her; now, however, when reproach had fallen upon her youthful head, and she had become, though undeservedly, an object of animadversion, they were the first to reject and disown her; as had new honors, however unmerited, crowned her they would have been the first to applaud.

CHAPTER IV.

ESTELLE.

"Alas! the breast that inly bleeds
Hath naught to fear from outward blow;
Who falls from all she knows of bliss
Cares little into what abyss."—Byron.

Meanwhile how passed the time with her who, stricken at her meridian culmination of honor and happiness, had fallen so suddenly and so low?

We left her seated in the carriage with Messrs. Oldfield and Trevor, on the road to Bloomingdale parsonage. Closely enveloped in the bridal vail, which she had had as yet no opportunity of changing, she sat back in a corner of the carriage.

She was too absorbed in her despair to notice the beautiful country through which their road passed, winding among wooded hills, down through flowery dales, or be-

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tween high hedges, tnickly matted and overgrown with the fragrant wild rose, the maythorn, and the sweet honeysuckle, and shutting in some richly-cultivated field or garden;—or to listen to the music of the thousand choristers of nature, now singing in concert their vesper hymn.

The sun went down amid a gorgeous blazonry of crimson, purple and gold; darkness crept over the heavens and the earth, and the stars came out, first one by one, and then in scores, and then in hundreds, until myriads of angel eyes seemed to look down from the firmament, and presently the full moon arose and flooded all this beautiful scene with silvery splendor; and still Estelle, buried in the depths of her despair, remained unconscious of time, or of the change of lights.

Neither of her companions addressed her, thinking it was better that, after so much excitement, she should be 'eft to her own reflections, if haply she might gain repose. Neither did they, in their respect for her grief, speak the one to the other; the ride passed in almost total silence.

It was late, and the moon rode high in the heavens, when the carriage turned into the narrow, shaded and decliving road leading down to Bloomingdale.

The place, as its name indicated, was a small, deep, verdant dell, settled down among crowded hills, in the midst of which nestled near together the little antique gothic church and the cottage parsonage; the cottage garden being divided from the church-yard only by a hedge, and the whole surrounded by a stone wall; and all—church, cottage, wall and hedge, so completely overgrown with moss, ivy, and creeping vines, and so densely crowded with shrubs and trees, as to be indistinguishable except by the spire rising from the clump of elms, and indicating the character of the obscured outlines.

"We are at home, dearest child," said Mr. Oldfield, as the carriage stopped.

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The footman sprang off from behind, opened the door and let down the steps.

Mr. Trevor alighted, followed by Mr. Oldfield, who handed out his protege. They were before a low garden gate, surrounded by an arch all overgrown with honeysuckles, whose pendent tendrils kissed their heads in passing through. They entered by this a semi-circular walk, under a lattice work, covered with grape vines, and leading around to the front portico of the cottage, which was covered closely, as was the whole house, with a matted growth of running roses, clematis, jessamine, flowering ivy, and every description of beautiful and fragrant climbing vine.

Within this green and blooming bower a light, in a shaded alabaster lamp, shone purely as a moon over the darkly-polished oaken door.

The Rector drew the arm of his charge protectingly within his own, and led her into this portico, and rapped.

His summons was answered by a neatly-dressed, red-cheeked, bright-eyed servant maid, who opened the door and smiled and courtesied on seeing her master; but immediately started and stared with open-mouthed wonder at the white-vailed form shrinking near him.

"Come, come, Sarah my good girl, let us in! What are you thinking of? Your mistress is——"

"Yes, sir, in the parlor!" exclaimed Sarah, recovering her self-command, and springing aside.

"Show us in there."

"Yes, sir," said Sarah, opening a door on the left side of the hall, and revealing one of the coziest of English home scenes.

It was a medium-sized parlor of faultless neatness and cleanliness, comfortably carpeted and curtained; warmed by a glowing fire of sea-coal, in a polished steel grate, that the chilly spring evening rendered acceptable; each side of this fire-place were deep recesses, from ceiling to floor,

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filled on the left by a tall book-case of favorite volumes, and on the right by a high cabinet of shells, minerals, ores, coins, medallions, storied old china, and other objects of vertu. Soft, deep sofas, easy chair, and foot-cushions, of various styles, to suit every need, and tables and stands for every reasonable parlor purpose, were conveniently arranged around.

But perhaps the most attractive article of furniture was the neat tea-table that stood in the midst of the room, before the glowing grate, covered with a milk-white, ample damask table-cloth that reached the floor, and laden with its glistening service of silver-plate and white china.

In an arm chair a little to the left of the table, sat a stately old lady of perhaps sixty-five years of age, looking not unlike the dignified house-keeper of Hyde Hall. She was arrayed in a stiff black gown, with a surplice bosom, open to reveal a glimpse of the snow-white muslin handkerchief crossed over the bosom within; a white muslin cap, with a very high and stiffly-starched crown, surmounted her silvery gray hair and severe physiognomy, and added height if not dignity to her appearance. On the other side, between her chair, and the corner of the fire-place, was a stand on which stood a lamp and a volume of what might have been religious tracts, just closed and laid aside, with her spectacles between the leaves to keep the place.

Had Estelle been in a condition to notice any thing, she might have been repelled by the severe aspect of this lady, who the reader has already guessed to be Mrs. Oldfield, the Rector's wife.

Mrs. Oldfield belonged to the old school of English women of the middle classes. A rigid pietist, a severe disciplinarian, a model wife, mother and house-keeper; she had reared, in high respectability, a large family, had seen her sons established in professions, had married off her daughters to eligible and responsible men—in a word, had

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completed her life's work without a flaw or blemish, and now at the age of sixty-five had sat down in perfect self-satisfaction and very little charity for those who had been less fortunate.

As she saw the party enter, she arose, somewhat stiffly, between formality, age and rheumatism, and stood ready to receive her guests; but soon stared almost as wildly as had Sarah Coply on perceiving the vailed bridal figure that hung upon her husband's arm; her first idea was, that their old bachelor friend, Mr. Trevor, had resolved upon taking to himself a wife, and brought the lady there to be married; she frowned formidably in advance at this supposititious irregularity.

Mr. Oldfield sighed deeply as he noticed the rigor of her first regards of one to whom he had dared to promise on her part a mother's tender care; he silently prayed that when she should know all, the weight of her righteous indignation might fall only on the guilty, not on the innocent unfortunate. But her austere aspect, while as yet she knew nothing to the disadvantage of the guest, (but that she seemed to be placed in an embarrassing position,) filled him with forebodings as to her future treatment of his charge; while he thanked heaven for the mental abstraction from outward objects that so shielded the already wounded heart of poor Estelle from the arrows of unkindness in her eyes.

All these thoughts on either side passed in much less time than it has taken to tell.

"This is Lady Montressor, Mrs. Oldfield," said the Rector, presenting his protege.

"Lady—Mon—tressor?" slowly repeated the hostess, gazing searchingly into the pale, worn, most despairing, yet perfectly beautiful face, that with its downcast eyes, was now unvailed and bowed before her.

She knew that Mr. Oldfield had gone to Hyde that morning to assist at the marriage of Lord Montressor and Miss

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Morel.e, whom by the way she had not seen for years, and could not now recognize in the sorrow-stunned woman before her; but why should Lady Montressor, who was married this morning, be here alone in bridal array, to-night?"

"Oh! I beg your ladyship's pardon," she said at length, recovering her presence of mind, though by no means her astonishment, and offering her own comfortable chair to her visitor—"Pray be seated, Lady Montressor."

Estelle mechanically sank into the proferred seat.

Mr. Trevor greeted his hostess, who welcomed him kindly, and invited him to sit down.

The Rector threw himself into his own favorite leathern chair, rubbed his hands with an assumption of cheerful ease, and said—

"Now tea! tea! my dear! as quickly as it can be served. This lady greatly needs refreshment, for I think she has not broken her fast since morning."

"But, perhaps, Lady Montressor would prefer first to retire to her room and change her dress," suggested the old lady, turning toward her guest and gazing with no abatement of astonishment upon her strange attire, wondering whether she had brought any baggage, and in fact wondering all around the compass of which she formed the centre.

But Estelle did not reply to her suggestion, most likely did not understand, or even hear it.

And Mr. Oldfield hastened to answer.

"No, my dear, I think not; her ladyship's trunks have not yet arrived, and I think she will not feel disposed to change until she retires for the night, which should be soon, as she is really ill from fatigue. Therefore, tea! tea! my good wife, as soon as possible."

Then rising, and crossing over to Estelle, he said,

"You would like to retire soon, my child, would you not?"

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"Oh! yes—yes," she murmured in a voice nearly extinct with grief and weariness.

"But—*where is his lordship?*" very naturally inquired the correct old gentlewoman.

"Lord Montressor—is—ahem!—not here at the present time," replied the Rector, pointedly; but seeing that this very direct answer failed to enlighten and satisfy his lady, he added, "Come, come, my dear! there is no misunderstanding between Lord and Lady Montressor; they are on excellent terms. Well, of course, there is *something* to be explained, which you shall hear in time! meanwhile, my dear, tea, tea!"

It was some comfort to be told that there *was* something real and not to be left to imagine herself under the influence of a wierd dream; and so the excellent woman, set somewhat more at ease upon the subject of this strange bridal apparition, rang and ordered tea, which was immediately served.

"Suffer me to relieve you, my child," said the Rector, gently, but rather awkwardly, officiating as lady's maid and unfastening and removing the vail and wreath from her brow. "There, let me draw your easy chair to the table. Do you hear me, dear child?" he inquired, uneasy at beholding her look of apathetic despair.

"Oh! yes, yes, I hear, understand, and thank you, for this and for all. I know—I remember, that but for you, I should have passed this night—that was to have been my wedding-night,—in prison," she murmured in a deep heart-thrilling tone.

"'*In prison!*'" Mrs. Oldfield had heard these fearful words, and involuntarily echoed them!

"Do not mind her, my dear Madam—she—I mean, don't mind her," whispered Mr. Trevor, to his hostess, whose astonishment had returned with a vengeance.

Estelle, had she been less absorbed in her profound sorrow, might have noticed the shocked and scandalized

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expression of the old lady's countenance; but as it was, the severe regards of Mrs. Oldfield fell harmlessly upon her whom despair had rendered invulnerable.

"Come, my child, you must really force yourself to take something. Endeavor now to swallow some tea and toast, for the sake of one in whose name I speak to you," said the Rector, gently placing his charge at the table.

Silently and mechanically Estelle did all that was required of her, though the act of swallowing was almost impossible. And now the deferential care of the two clergymen for their fair charge again modified Mrs. Oldfield's ill suspicions of her guest.

Directly after tea, at the suggestion of Mr. Oldfield, the bell was rung, and the little bright-eyed maid, Sarah Copley, was summoned to show Lady Montressor to her chamber.

Mrs. Oldfield gave some directions in a low voice, aside to her Abigail, who courtesied, lighted a night-lamp, and stood ready to attend her ladyship.

Silently and mechanically Estelle arose and bowing good night to the circle, followed her attendant from the parlor.

When they had disappeared, Mr. Oldfield told the story of Lady Montressor's arrest at the altar, and the subsequent developments relating to her school history. But no logic or eloquence of the narrator, no palliating or explaining of the circumstances, could serve to lessen in Mrs. Oldfield's estimation the moral turpitude of her whom this rigorous judge persisted in regarding as a sinner of the deepest dye. And the anxious and distressed rector had the utmost difficulty in obtaining a promise that the unhappy lady, while she remained their guest, should be attended and served with the consideration due her rank. But this promise once given, however reluctantly, he knew would be faithfully performed.

Lady Montressor reached her chamber, which was the

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front room immediately over the parlor, and which she found neatly and plainly arranged, with a polished wax floor, maple furniture, and white dimity curtains, bed hangings and chair covers, and warmed by a bright little fire in the grate. The cheerful maid laid out a delicate cap and gown from her mistress's wardrobe, and stood waiting Lady Montressor's orders. Estelle gently declined her further attendance, and dismissed her.

And then——

For the first time since her appalling calamity, Estelle found herself alone.

She sank into an arm-chair, dropped her throbbing and burning forehead upon her hands, and tried to recollect herself and think coherently. For now that she was alone, the fearful events of the last twelve hours seemed the wierd and horrible conjurations of fever or nightmare. It was as difficult as it was terrible to realize her position.

The first stunning shock of the storm had passed. The thunderbolt had fallen, and the charred and blackened ruins of her happiness lay all around her. The whirlwind had crossed her path of life, sweeping away her dearest treasures. The waters of affliction had rolled over her soul, bearing off her most precious earthly hopes. Yes, the first shock of the storm had passed; but desolation was within and around her, and the clouds still lowered, dark, heavy, and threatening, over her devoted head.

She rapidly reviewed the chain of circumstances—when scarcely fourteen years of age, she had been ensnared by an intriguing governess, and an unprincipled fortune-hunter, into a secret marriage, soon bitterly repented by herself, and disrupted by the man's felony, and now pronounced to have been from the beginning illegal. After ten years of separation, and two of supposed widowhood, she had that morning contracted a second marriage with a party of the highest rank and character, which was said to be legal and

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binding to all intents and purposes. Arrested on leaving the church, upon a grave and degrading charge, she had been discarded by her parents, who would probably leave England forever, to conceal their humiliation under foreign skies; but was protected, though most delicately, from a distance, through reverend hands, by Lord Montressor, a man of stainless honor, who would be the last on earth to sacrifice moral principle to human affection, and who had in view of the law and the testimony, declared his determination to stand by the legality of their late marriage, had given her the protection of his name and title; and exacted of all others that they should address her only by that; finally, she was bound over to appear at the approaching assizes to answer the charge of a terrible and shameful crime!

Such was the past and present.

What lay before her in the future?

Her trial.

It is true that her counsel and her few devoted friends, flattered themselves and her with the promise of certain deliverance. But even her limited experience taught her that very little dependence could be placed upon the prejudgment of partisans, who always made it a point to sustain the hopes of the accused by positive promises of acquittal, which were not always confirmed by the verdict of the jury. The law was proverbially uncertain. It was very possible she might be convicted.

And then—

A vision of the convict cell, the transport ship, the penal colonies, swam darkly before her mind's eyes, turning her soul sick with horror. It was but for a moment, and then, strange to say, she regarded this possible result as the condemned might regard the rack, the wheel, or the stake—a frightful torture certainly, but one happily soon ending in death. And merely saying—

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"I should soon sink under it, and that would be well,"—she dismissed the vision, and turned to look upon the other—scarcely the happier—contingency.

She might be acquitted, as was confidently promised by her friends, upon the ground of the illegality of the childish marriage into which she had first been entrapped.

Such were the uncertain prospects of the future.

What now became her duty?

For, with whomsoever the adjudication of her legal position rested, that of her moral one remained, under these as under other circumstances, with herself alone.

What then was her duty?

It might be indicated by circumstances.

In the event of a conviction, her fate would be taken out of her own hands, leaving her nothing to do, but simply to submit and be patient until death should terminate her sufferings.

But on the other hand, with the issue of acquittal would come a mighty moral problem, involving a terrible soul-struggle; for then Lord Montressor would immediately claim her as his wife; nay more, he would undoubtedly have his traveling carriage in waiting to convey her directly from the scene of her sufferings to his seat in Dorset, or to some other peaceful retreat he would provide, where the arms of affection should uphold and nurse her back to life, health, and serenity. The laws of the realm would sustain him in this course; the world, ever ready to bow to success, would be his partisan; and deeper and more potent than law, or world, the advocate in her own heart was retained in his service and would plead his cause.

Should she admit his claim, yield herself up to his higher wisdom for direction, and with a child's unquestioning trust repose in the blessed haven of his large love?

For a moment, a vision of this sweet rest beamed in upon her dark and troubled soul like the holy light of heaven.

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Should she give herself up to the happiness prepared for her?

There was a pause—a long pause, and silence in her soul. Her conscience gave no affirmative.

She only saw herself at a fork in the road of life from which two paths diverged.

The one splendid with sunshine, beautiful with verdure, brilliant with flowers, and fragrant with their breath, musical with bird songs, and more than all, blessed with the presence of her noble beloved, who stood with outstretched arms, wooing her to enter. But, was Duty there?

The other, dark with cloud and storm, barren, silent, solitary, desolate, no helping hand there held out to her, no encouraging voice inviting her, she would tread it, if tread it she must, *alone*, with tearful eyes and bleeding feet, and staggering steps; yet not unblessed, if Duty were there

How should she decide? The question pressed itself upon her conscience for solution. She would not try to shake it off, to say—"Time enough when the trial is over" —for she felt constrained to be prepared for the result of that trial.

It was a terrible ordeal! one not to be safely passed without much prayer.

Estelle sank upon her knees, and prayed long and earnestly for light to see her duty, and for strength to follow it. Who ever sought the Source of light and strength and came away blind and feeble?

The night spent in prayer brought a morning full of peace and courage. She had decided what her course should be in the event of an acquittal.

It was eight o'clock before her bell summoned Sarah Copley, who entered as usual, smilingly, and said:

"If you please, my lady, your trunks have come from Hyde, and will you please to have them brought up here?"

"Yes, certainly, my girl, but how came they here?"

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"Please, my lady, I don't know; but when my master sent back the Bishop's carriage, he sent a note to Sir Parke Morelle, I know, because I handed it to John, the footman, to deliver; and, please your ladyship, the trunks came about half an hour ago, and your ladyship's own maid came with them."

"What? Susan Copsewood?"

"Yes, your ladyship, shall I send her up? or would your ladyship accept my services?"

"Thank you, my good girl, no; send up Susan Copsewood."

"Yes, madam," said the Abigail, disappearing.

In a few minutes after, Susan Copsewood entered, and immediately upon the sight of her adored and unhappy mistress, sank down at her feet, embraced her knees, and burst into tears.

Lady Montressor laid her hand upon the girl's head in silent benediction. There was no utility in words as yet, and none were spoken. When, however, Susan had wept herself into calmness, and had arisen from her feet, and stood waiting, Lady Montressor inquired—

"How are my father and mother, Susan?"

"Hem! dear lady, I always tell you the truth if I speak at all. But now please excuse me from speaking," said the girl, sadly.

"Ah! God, is it so?—have I nearly killed or maddened my parents?" exclaimed Lady Montressor, growing deathly pale and faint, and sinking into the nearest seat.

"Oh, then, I see I must speak! No, dear madam, Sir Parke and my lady are not dead, nor are they any madder than they always were—saving your presence; but, since I must tell the truth lest worse be thought, they are both very angry."

"It was to be expected! But what put it in your head, kind girl, to come to me?"

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"Why, no one put it there—it came there naturally, my lady! What else could I do but come to you the first opportunity? Last night about eleven o'clock, John Brownloe, the Bishop of Exeter's footman, brought a note from Mr. Oldfield to master I saw it handed to master's own man to be carried up. Well! soon the bell was rung for me, and I was ordered to pack up all your ladyship's wardrobe, and have it ready to dispatch at four o'clock this morning. So I went to work and did it. Just before I strapped down the last trunk, master came in. And 'Susan,' says he, 'have you strapped down all the trunks?' 'All but this, sir,' says I. 'Lift up the lid,' says he. I did so, and he put a letter in——"

"A letter! Susan, my girl, where is it?" exclaimed Lady Montressor, eagerly.

"In the buff-colored trunk, my lady, which they are going to bring up presently."

"Go on."

"Well, as I was saying, dear lady, after I had packed every thing up, and looked around to see if any thing had been forgotten, lo and behold there was *myself* that might have been left behind, if I hadn't recollected, so I got ready with the rest of your ladyship's effects, to be sent off. Thus at four o'clock in the morning I delivered myself along with the trunks. 'And who are you?' says the drayman. 'I wasn't hired to take no passengers, but only baggage,' says he. 'Very well,' says I. 'I'm part of her ladyship's baggage—lend a hand and hoist me up.' So after a little more altercation, the stupid fellow let me up, and here I am, your ladyship!"

"Thank you, Susan; you——"

She was here interrupted by a rap at the door.

It was a couple of plow-boys, who had brought up her trunks. As soon as they were placed, and the boys had retired, Lady Montressor hastened to take the keys from

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Susan, and unlock one—the one indicated as containing the letter. There it lay upon the top of all the contents—she snatched it eagerly. Oh! might it bear one word of peace and pardon to her sorrow-stricken heart! She tore it open. It was an envelope, containing a check for a thousand pounds, drawn in her favor, upon the bank of Exeter. No more, not a line—not a word. With a deep sigh, Estelle laid it aside, and sank into her chair.

The maid, with a tact and delicacy above her condition in life, selected from among the many rich dresses of the trousseau, a morning robe of pale gray silk—the plainest there, and laid it out for her lady's use; and then, without words, prepared her toilet; so that Lady Montressor was ready to go below to meet the family at their nine o'clock breakfast.

As she descended, the hall door was open, and she looked out. How beautiful, on this bright May morning, was the parsonage and its surroundings,—a wilderness of flowers, shrubs, and trees, with the old church spire rising from the midst. Upon any other former day, this sweet rural landscape would have filled the heart of Estelle with delight; now, however, she only saw that it was lovely, and passed on to the door on the right, leading into the parlor.

The family were already gathered there. As she opened the door, Mr. Oldfield arose and came to meet her, and with a kind—

"Good-morning, my child; I hope you have rested well," led her to the table.

Mrs. Oldfield treated her with stately courtesy.

And Mr. Trevor, with a smile and bow, placed a chair for her use.

Breakfast, that seemed only to await her arrival, was immediately served. During that meal Mrs. Oldfield never, except in strict necessity, addressed her fair guest; and when she spoke it was with the most ceremonious politeness.

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There was nothing to complain of, yet Lady Montressor felt depressed and chilled; but she accepted this, as all else, in the submissive spirit of expiation.

Immediately after breakfast Mr. Trevor, whose charge lay in the neighborhood of Montressor Castle, in the adjoining county of Dorset, took leave, saying, as he held the hand of Lady Montressor:

"Though I depart from your presence, I remain in your service, my child. When I can render you any assistance, command me; I am ever at your orders."

"I earnestly thank you, sir," replied Estelle.

Mr. Trevor was gone.

Mr. Oldfield went out to make parish calls.

And Lady Montressor was left alone with her hostess, who, though polite, was not congenial.

Soon, therefore, Estelle retired to her chamber.

Her faithful maid had set the room in order, and was now engaged in unpacking and hanging up her dresses in the two clothes closets that flanked the fire-place. They formed a part of that rich, tasteful, and costly trousseau that had been provided for her bridal day's vanities,—trifles certainly they were at most; yet as mementos of the past, the past, but only yesterday, yet seeming, by the yawning gulf that divided it from to-day, so far apart, so long ago!—it was painful to see them again! So Susan Copsewood instinctively felt, and she hurried them out of sight.

"Have they sent my pocket Bible among the rest, Susan?"

"Yes, my lady, here it is," and the faithful girl handed it to her mistress.

Lady Montressor received the blessed volume with reverence, and sinking into her arm-chair, opened its pages to seek for light and strength and comfort.

"Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you

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whom you shall fear: Fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him."

These were the words that first met her eye, and she felt them as a message to her own soul. She read no further just then, but softly dropping the book upon her lap, she fell into deep meditation upon the word. Yes! amid all the storm and terror of her position, the question presented to her soul was the old, old question of simply doing right or doing wrong. And her Judge, above all judges was—God! Might he strengthen her to do her awful duty!

While Lady Montressor meditated, read, and prayed in her chamber, the news that she had sought sanctuary with the Rector of Bloomingdale spread swiftly through the neighborhood. And many were the friends and acquaintance of the Rector's family, who *happened* to drop in during the course of that day. Some few among them were personally known to Estelle, and these ventured to inquire for her; but Mrs. Oldfield, after sending a message to her guest, and receiving an answer, replied stiffly that Lady Montressor preferred to keep her chamber, and declined visitors. And so day after day passed, during which Estelle secluded herself, or only appeared when summoned to join the family at meal times.

Lord Montressor, busy in her cause, forbore to visit or even to correspond with his hapless bride.

Lord Dazzleright devoted the whole of his valuable time and great legal ability to her case, and spoke confidently of a fortunate issue.

Once during the week he called upon his client, and was the first and only visitor that Lady Montressor, during her self-sequestration, received. He came to gather from her minute and detailed particulars of her school-life, and *quasi* marriage, and having possessed himself of all, and taken notes, he said:

"There can be no doubt as to the result of this trial. It

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will be not only an acquittal, but a full and complete vindication. Therefore, permit me to say, Lady Montressor, that you do wrong to withdraw yourself from your husband's protection. Your course argues, on your part, a doubt of your true position, which may injure your case, when it comes before the Assizes."

"My lord, there is a higher tribunal, at which, some day, I shall have to appear, and I must act in view of that," replied the lady, in a deep, liquid, melodious voice, that seemed to flow and ripple over the fragments of a broken heart.

Lord Dazzleright looked suddenly into her face, and through its dark and lovely features recognized the spirit that could "suffer and be strong"—the spirit patient and firm as sad. He sighed, and pressed her hand as he took his leave.

The next day Estelle learned, through Susan Copsewood, who had obtained the news from authentic sources, that her parents had gone to Southampton, whence they would sail in a few days for Italy.

"Another blow! I accept it! Oh, God, I accept it! Only make me patient to suffer, and strong to act!" was the prayer that went up from her crushed heart, upon hearing of this desertion.

She opened her Bible to seek for comfort. Did an angel guide her hand, or did the Lord of heaven and earth—the Father of all, before whom not a sparrow falleth unmarked—thus speak directly to his stricken child? For oh, words of life and light! these were they that met her mournful eyes: "Fear *thou* not; for *I* am with thee: be not dismayed; for *I* am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

She dropped the book and closed her eyes, for a flood of blessing had descended upon her, enveloping and im-

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penetrating her whole being, and filling her with Divine love, wisdom, and strength.

She needed all—love to teach her patience and forgiveness under unjust contumely, wisdom to guide her in her dark and dangerous path, strength to enable her to bear the approaching terrible ordeal.

In a few days intelligence was received that the Judges were within a few days' journey of Exeter, and that the Assizes would be opened on the following Monday.

Good Mr. Oldfield heard this news with much more agitation than was felt by his charge, who, pale and still, awaited her fate.

The Rector wrote a note and sent it by a special messenger to Lord Dazzleright, desiring his lordship to come at his earliest possible convenience and advise with him.

Lord Dazzleright lost no time in complying with the request, and arrived the next day at the parsonage.

Mr. Oldfield immediately conducted his lordship into his library, which was the room on the right side of the entrance-hall, opposite to his old wife's parlor.

When they had reached this apartment, the Rector handed a chair to his guest, and dropped himself into another, saying:

"The Assizes are at hand."

"I know it—thank Heaven, the suspense will be over," replied Lord Dazzleright, cheerfully.

"But—I took the liberty of sending for your lordship to ask—what am *I*, as Lady Montressor's surety, expected to do? Am I to wait here with her until a tipstaff summons us to appear, or must I take her to Exeter, and render her up? You see, though I am seventy years of age, I was never in a criminal court in any capacity in my life, and know no more of its forms than a child."

"I see: of course you are expected, without further notice to bring your charge into court. But, anticipating

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this natural embarrassment on your part, I have brought and left my carriage at the inn, and will call with it to-morrow to take yourself and Lady Montressor to Exeter—if you will accept."

"Oh, with promptitude, and many thanks, my lord."

"In this case, then, all that you will have to do will be to take seats in the carriage and leave the rest to myself, as her ladyship's counsel."

"I am very grateful to have my mind thus far relieved, my lord."

"I shall be at your door to-morrow morning, at ten—if that hour will suit you."

"Perfectly, my lord."

"And now, as I have a world of business on my hands, I must bid you good-day," said Lord Dazzleright.

"Good-day, and many thanks, my lord."

The next morning, at the appointed hour, Lord Dazzleright's carriage stood before the vine-shaded garden gate of the parsonage.

It was a dark, gloomy, foreboding day, and sensibly affected the spirits of all concerned.

Estelle prayed long and earnestly in her chamber, remaining on her knees, until a gentle rap at the door, and the voice of her faithful attendant, warned her that her friends were waiting. Then she arose, and over her simple grey silk dress wrapped a fine grey woolen shawl, put on a close cottage bonnet of grey crape, threw over it a black lace vail, took her gloves and her Bible, and followed her maid down stairs.

Mr. Oldfield waited in the hall, and Lord Dazzleright in the carriage, to receive her.

Lord Dazzleright's kindness of heart suggested all things needful.

"Where is her ladyship's woman?" he inquired, afte.

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greeting Lady Montressor, and observing that she was unattended. "Is she not going with her mistress?"

"Why, nothing has been said of it, my lord; we did not know that it would be convenient to your lordship to——"

"Is that she? hasten, my good girl, throw on your bonnet, and get in here beside me—did you not know your lady would require your services?" said Lord Dazzleright, interrupting the Rector to hurry the maid.

"Yes, my lord, I knew it well enough, only——" the rest of her sentence was lost in distance, as she hurried around the circular walk toward the house. She re-appeared in five minutes, and took her place in the carriage.

And Lady Montressor and the Rector occupying the back seat, and Lord Dazzleright and the maid the front one, they drove rapidly off toward the Exeter turnpike.

A long, dreary ride, under a dark and weeping sky, and over a landscape humid with its fallen tears, brought them, at the close of day, into the city of Exeter, the capital of Devonshire, and the ancient seat of the West Saxon kings They drew up, and turned into the court-yard of a quiet hotel in the neighborhood of the Assizes. There was no registry of names required there, as in our own "free" country, and therefore no gaping and staring crowd could identify the pale, beautiful woman, who came attended by a clergyman and an attorney, as the high-born lady, whose approaching trial for a grave offense, occupied all thoughts, and attracted crowds to the city; and no officious reporters could publish the fact that—"Lady Montressor occupied apartments at the 'Crown and Sceptre.'" The next day was the Sabbath, during which Estelle, escorted by Mr. Oldfield, twice attended Divine service in public, without attracting attention. She passed the evening in her chamber, in prayer and self-communion, to be ready to meet the morrow and the opening of the Assizes.

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CHAPTER V.

THE ASSIZES.

"And still and pale and silently
The hapless lady waits her doom;
How changed since last her speaking eye
Glanced gladness round the glittering room,
When high-born men were proud to wait,
Where beauty watched to imitate
Her gentle voice, her lovely mien,
And gather from her air and gait
The graces of its queen."—*Byron.*

THE next day, Monday, May 15th, the Assizes were opened with the usual attendant ceremony and bustle. And a remarkably interessing docket had attracted crowds to the spot.

The case of Lady Montressor was almost the last on the list, and divided public curiosity with that of Dlifp Oorak, the Gipsy chief.

At nine o'clock, closely vailed, and attended by the Rev. Mr. Oldfield and her counsel, Lady Montressor left her lodgings, entered the carriage, and was driven to the Court-house. Upon the proclamation of the public crier, that the courts were now open, etc., etc., etc—she was handed from the carriage, and still closely vailed, and leaning upon the arm of her venerable friend, entered Exeter Hall, and proceeded to the court-room.

Estelle had never been inside a court before. At first she had traversed the passage and staircase, blindly, behind her vail, but when she found herself in a crowded room, impeded, and finally nearly smothered by the pressure of the masses, she drew her vail aside for air, and saw herself

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within a vast hall, with an arched roof, marble pillars, and Gothic windows, not unlike a lecture-room or church.

Upon an elevated platform, technically called the "Bench," placed at the upper end of the room, and enclosed by a spacious iron-railing, sat the Judge, Sir James Allan Parke, one of the most eminent of the judges on the Western Circuit of England; he was a fine, hale-looking old gentleman, arrayed in his official robes—a scarlet gown, ermine cape, and full-bottomed wig. On the wall near his seat was blazoned forth in large illuminated letters the king's commission. A little below him sat the clerk of the court. And around—sitting, standing, walking about, or conversing,—were the officers of the crown, in their official liveries, the counsellors-at-law in their long black robes and white wigs, and various nondescript individuals, who seemed to hold a sort of middle place between official and non-official life.

On the right hand, below the bench, was the prisoner's dock, an enclosure not unlike a pen, in which were gathered some twenty persons of both sexes, and all ages, from twelve to seventy. Lady Montressor's eyes were spell-bound to that miserable place. Such a set of wretched-looking human creatures!—men, aye, and women and children, too!—with faces stupefied with suffering, palsied by despair, or demoralized by guilt!

"Heaven and earth!—is my place among these?" she exclaimed, sick with loathing and terror. But in a moment she rallied and rebuked herself. "Down proud heart," she said, "who hath made me to differ, and how much at last *do* I differ from these my poor brothers and sisters? *I* fell before the first temptation, though all my life was fenced about from want, or care, or sin—while they—their lives may have been one series of privations, trials, and irresistible temptations! Who shall judge but God Omniscient? God comfort them, and forgive me!" she prayed meekly folding her hands and bowing her head.

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Her venerable protector, as inexperienced in these scenes as herself, also contemplated that den of savage or brutal faces, and grew pale with dread for his delicate charge. He did not venture to turn his eyes toward Estelle, but instinctively drew her arm closer within his own, and looked around in distress for Lord Dazzleright. His lordship had left them, and might now be seen conversing with the Judge. Presently he bowed, left his position, and with a grave, sad, almost angry countenance, slowly made his way through the crowd, and approached his client.

"Well, well, Lord Dazzleright, well?" eagerly inquired Mr. Oldfield, alarmed at the ill-omened expression of the counsel's face.

"Oh! it is nothing! it is nothing!" said his lordship, drawing his handkerchief from his pocket and wiping his heated and perspiring brow.

"It is not precisely *nothing*, Lord Dazzleright, judging from your countenance and manner," said Estelle, calmly and firmly.

"Well, my child, it is nothing to alarm *you*, although it is something to displease me."

"Tell me the truth, Lord Dazzleright."

"I will do so, Lady Montressor! I went up there to examine the docket. I find our case is the last but two on the list, and may not probably come up for a week or ten days; I did not see the necessity of your ladyship's presence here in the interim. I had an opportunity of speaking to the Judge, and showed him this, and prayed that my client might be discharged from the obligation of attending court, and suffered to remain with her bail, here in the city, until the day upon which her trial should come up, when she should again punctually present herself. The Judge chose to refuse my reasonable request, and require my client's daily attendance here And I am angry; that is all."

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"Except that you are also *anxious*, my lord! Is it not so? Hide nothing from me."

"No, no, certainly not *anxious*," said the counsel, while his looks belied his words,—"in no degree *anxious*, for though this may appear unfavorable on the part of the court, yet Sir James Allan Parke, if a stern, is a just Judge, and I rest our cause upon its integral justice, not upon external favor."

"Umme! Oh—hh!" groaned the good Rector—"so she is to remain here, poor lamb! day after day a spectator of all the revolting horrors of a criminal court—and," sinking his voice to a whisper, "where is she to stand?—for the love of Heaven, not there! in the dock among those loathsome wretches?"

Lord Dazzleright looked positively shocked and enraged.

"*There!* You astound me, Reverend sir! Those poor outcasts are in the sheriff's custody; daily he marshals them from their cells to the dock, and nightly from the dock to their cells. 'He is king of that goodly company.' Lady Montressor, sir, is *your* holy charge; you only are responsible for her appearance, and may make her position as exclusive and as comfortable as you desire."

"Oh, thank heaven! Since it is so then—pray let us find a secluded and—I was going to say pleasant seat—as if such a thing could be found in this place."

"Doubtless, a moderately agreeable one can be found though," said Lord Dazzleright, cheerfully putting aside his anger, and offering his arm to his client, to conduct her through the crowd.

But just as Estelle was about to accept the proffered assistance, she perceived a hurried step approach from behind, and a deep voice speak, at the sound of which, the whole tide of life turned back upon its course, opening her heart, and whelming her senses, in a mist of mingled rapture and anguish.

"Permit me, my lord," the voice said, and gently putting

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aside the counsel, Lord Montressor took the arm of his bride and drew it within his own.

Estelle's whole being was thrilled with emotion, half ecstacy, half agony, as I said. She turned away her swiftly flushing and paling face, bowed her head and prayed.

"Ah, my lord! my lord! is this act of yours well conceived?—is it prudent?—is it politic?" inquired the good Rector, in distress.

"It is *right;* beyond that I have not considered whether it was politic, or prudent, reverend sir," replied his lordship. Then turning his face most tenderly down toward the lady on his arm, he said in a low voice—

"Estelle, my beloved, will you not look at me?"

She put back her vail, lifted her head, turned up to him a look of profound, unutterable, undying love then dropped her eyes.

"Speak to me, dearest Stella."

"Ah, my lord! my lord! what can poor Stella say, but echo what the minister said just now—'Was this *well* done, Lord Montressor?'"

"Excellently well done, my Stella! You are my wife! Where should I be, but beside my wife in her trial? Have I not said that I would stand upon the legality of our marriage. How shall I stand by our marriage, and desert my wife? I never contemplated such an inconsistency for a moment! It is true—for that no one should venture to say, or hint, that selfish or unscrupulous passion had governed my actions—I consented to forego my rights and inclinations in favor of your delicate reserve, and yield up to the care of Mr. Oldfield; and I for more to intrude, either by visit or letter, upon the sanctuary of your private life. Now, however, the case is widely different. You are before the public, before a judge, charged with a crime, exposed to a severe ordeal. Shall I leave you to tread this wine-press alone? No, no, so help me Heaven

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at my bitterest need—no! Before the same public, before the same judge, through all the ordeal, will I stand by your side, and with what manhood, strength and virtue there may be within me, assert my position and your innocence. Nor man, nor demon—world, flesh, nor devil, shall prevent me doing thus! And may Christ so aid me in my greatest extremity as I am true to thee! Amen," he said, and reverently bowed his head.

It was vain to oppose a will like that of Lord Montressor. Besides, he was approved by Lord Dazzleright, and felt to be a tower of strength by Mr. Oldfield.

"We were about to find a comfortable seat for her ladyship," said the counsel.

"I have already found one. Will you go with us, my lord?—and you, reverend sir?" inquired Lord Montressor, bowing to his two friends, and leading the way through the crowd that respectfully divided to let him pass. He had provided a seat in a distant and retired part of the court-room, out of sight of the prisoners' dock, and nearly out of hearing of all that was revolting in the proceedings.

Here she sat, unobseved and unmolested for a time, Lord Montressor, Mr. Oldfield and Lord Dazzleright standing as a living shield between her and the eyes of the crowd. There was little danger now, however, that she should be troubled by the impertinent curiosity of others. For all attention was now turned upon the proceedings of the court at the upper end of the room. The jury was already empanneled, and the first case on the docket called up. It was that of Dlifp Oorak, the Gipsy king, indicted for the murder of Sir George Bannerman's gamekeeper. He was now arraigned and standing at the bar. All eyes were fixed upon him—a little dark, wiry figure of a man, with sharp features and deep set glittering black eyes, thatched with a wisp of wild black hair, and looking alert, spry and restless, as if in another instant he would break loose,

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bound over intervening obstacles, clear the door or window, and be away in the free air again!

Even Lady Montressor, notwithstanding the absorbing nature of her own sorrow, fixed her languid eyes upon this savage child of nature, now bound and captive, and in deadly peril of his life, and watched in hope and fear the progress of his short trial. The forms were quickly dispatched; the testimony on both sides heard; the exposition of the opposite lawyers made; the charge of the judge delivered; the case given to the jury, and their verdict returned.

"Stand up and confront the jury;" was the order given to the prisoner.

"How say you, gentlemen of the jury, is the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?"

For an instant there was a pause and silence in the court, during which you might have heard a heart beat, broken soon by the deep voice of the foreman pronouncing the awful word of doom,—

"GUILTY!"

He was only a Gipsy, and it had not taken the twelve long to find their verdict.

The prisoner was then asked if he had any thing to advance as a just reason why sentence of death should not be pronounced against him.

Dlifp Oorak laughed wildly, shook his black, elf locks, and intimated that since the doom was to be only death, he had no objection to make!—had it been a long imprisonment, now, that were another matter! And the Gipsy chief impatiently stretched his limbs and looked longingly abroad through the tall gothic windows into the free, sunny air.

His attention was gravely recalled by the judge, who donned the black cap, arose, and proceeded to pronounce sentence.

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The Gipsy heard his doom with an indifference and a wandering of the eyes bordering on "contempt of court."

A little delay and bustle ensued, during which the sheriff's officers proceeded to remove the prisoner from court. In going out, they passed very near our group of friends.

Lady Montressor noticed his half-savage, half-child-like demeanor, caught a glance from his wild, deer eyes, and silently offered up the care of his untutored soul to Christ.

This prisoner had scarcely left the court before the second case upon the docket was called. It was that of a young girl charged with the crime of infanticide. The details of this case were so painful, so revolting, that one by one the women in the crowd veiled themselves and silently stole away. While Estelle, the most delicate, sensitive and refined of women, was compelled to sit there, between her friend and her minister, and hear the whole! The trial occupied three hours, and ended as the preceding one had ended—in the conviction of the prisoner and sentence of death.

"So young! merciful Saviour! so young, and so horribly lost!" cried Lady Montressor, in a stifled voice, covering her eyes to shut out the vision of that girl's white, amazed, insane countenance! As the ruined one passed out under charge of the deputy sheriff, she turned back upon our group of friends, one wild, terrified, appealing gaze, that reminded Estelle of the portrait of the Cenci and remained fixed in her mind forever. She prayed for the lost fellow-creature, and while she prayed the court adjourned.

Mr. Oldfield with a deep sigh arose and was about to offer his arm to his charge, when Lord Montressor, who had remained standing, anticipated him, and drew the hand of Estelle through his own arm. They made slow progress through the crowd, and reached the portico, and went to the street. On reaching the carriage, Lord Montrassor

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handed Estelle in, saw her comfortably seated, and then said:—

"Before this tribunal and in public, dearest Stella, I must assert at once our position—your innocence and my rights; but,—that no one shall venture to call in question the motives of my conduct or yours,—I shall refrain from intruding on your private life, until the decision of your case shall have endorsed our union. Farewell, I will meet you here to-morrow, dearest." And pressing her hand, he bowed and gave way to Mr. Oldfield, who immediately entered the carriage; and they drove rapidly to their hotel.

This was the history of the first day at court; and the second and third, and many succeeding days, were like unto it—dreary, depressing, dreadful records of vice, crime, and suffering, of every kind and every degree. There were ten capital cases on the docket. And in that single session of the Assizes at Exeter, Sir James Allan Parke pronounced sentence of death upon seven persons, including the king of the Gipsies, all of whom were hanged within a week after their conviction.

And day after day, in this fetid atmosphere of guilt and death and horror, Lady Montressor sat and sickened—sickened and despaired to see these poor outcasts of Christianity—these sinning and suffering wrecks of humanity—men, women, and even children, one after another, fall into the horrible pit prepared by their own crimes. For the acquittals were very few. English courts are stern and strict, almost invariably endorsing by their action the warrants of their justice, and the true bills of their grand jury. The numerous, seemingly merciless convictions of the court, wrung her heart not only with the most painful pity for other sufferers, but with despair for herself and for those deeply interested in her fate. And as she heard one after another culprit convicted of theft, poaching, shop-lifting,

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burglary, or what not,—sentenced to transportation to Botany Bay, and saw the half-brutal, half-demoniac faces of these wretches glare on her as they passed out,—again the vision of the convict ship, and colony, with all their loathsome horrors, darkened around her soul, for she remembered that the crime of which she—even *she*—stood accused, was also a transportable offense; and convictions seemed to be the unvarying rule of this court! And thus, in this foul and deadly atmosphere of sin and sorrow, she sat and sickened and despaired, until the thirteenth day, when her case was called.

It was the first of June, when the sun smiled down in cloudless beauty from the deep blue sky, upon a land green with luxuriant vegetation, blooming and fragrant with flowers, and vocal with the songs of birds. It was a bright, beautiful, and glorious day; but to Estelle and her friends a day of darkness, gloom and terror!

The news that the trial would come on that morning had been noised abroad, all over the city, and throughout the country, and had attracted all Exeter to the court-house.

As on preceding days, before leaving her lodgings, for the court, Lady Montressor prayed long and earnestly. And then deeply vailed, and leaning on the arm of the venerable pastor, she came out, to enter the carriage. The populace, who had at last discovered her lodgings and identified her carriage, were now gathered in a dense crowd before the hotel, waiting to see this interesting prisoner. Short as was the distance from the portico to the coach, and deeply vailed as was the lady, she shuddered in passing through this crowd, whose gaze she could not see, but keenly, deeply, *felt* fixed upon her form. Mr. Oldfield quickly and nervously handed her into the coach, followed her, took his seat, put up the blinds and let down the curtains; and having thus carefully closed up the carriage, gave orders to the coachman to drive on. They drove per-

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force slowly through the crowded streets that became more thronged, at every square, as they approached the court house. When at last the coach drew up before the Hall, Mr. Oldfield alighted, and in the same quick, nervous manner, handed her out, and attempted to hurry her through the crowd that thronged around, and into the court-house, and choked up its portico, entrance hall, and staircase.

Estelle looked wildly around upon this vast and curious multitude. Among the carriages that blocked up the street before the building, she recognized the liveries of many of her former friends, and in the crowd that thronged into the court-house, she identified many of the guests who had been bidden to that wedding-breakfast to which she had never returned. Since that fatal day to this—perhaps more fatal one—she had not seen or heard from one of them! Why came they now?—to gloat over her calamities? Who could tell? None but the Searcher of hearts! but their presence here made *her* heart sink; true, it was a trifle added to the great sum of her misery; but it was only an added feather that is said to have broken the camel's back. These thoughts had scarcely passed through her mind, when she saw Lord Montressor emerge from the crowd on the portico and come down the steps to join her.

"A few hours more of fortitude, dear Stella, and you will be free!" he said, as he drew her hand within his arm. He then bowed to Mr. Oldfield, and called a police-officer, whom he directed to precede and clear a way for them through the crowd. And then with his fine head erect and uncovered, and with a mien as self-possessed and dignified as that with which he had a month ago led his bride into the church, he now led her through the crowded portico and passage-way, and up the staircase into the court.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE ARRAIGNMENT.

"She stood before the crowded court,
Forlorn—but oh! how fair!
Though many a beauty graced the hall,
To me, the loveliest there.

Ah! how I wished some angel then
His pitying wing would spread,
To shelter from the scorn of men
That fair, defenseless head."—*Mrs. Thorne Holmes.*

On entering the thronged room, a group to the left of the door, forced itself upon Lord Montressor's notice. It consisted of Victoire L'Orient, the little old French woman and the Abbe. The woman recognized Estelle, and pressed forward exclaiming vindictively:

"Ah, good! So that you madame—verily! Your most obedient, madame," etc. etc. Until, at length, without looking at her, Lord Montressor juts put out his arm and brushed the troublesome reptile from his lady's path, and led her on to the same secluded seat she had daily occupied since her attendance at court. They had not been seated more than five minutes, before they were joined by Lord Dazzleright, who came hurriedly to announce that there would be no more delay than was necessary to arrange preliminaries, and that his client would be almost immediately placed at the bar. And then he hastened away again to attend to some business connected with the approaching trial.

Estelle closed her eyes and sank back in her chair. It had come, then, it had surely come. At the same bar at which within a fortnight past she had seen so many stand

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to answer to the charge of guilt, and from which she had seen so many sent to exile, to imprisonment, or to death, she also must stand to answer to the charge of crime, for which, should she be convicted, she also, even *she* the delicate, sensitive, refined child of wealth, luxury and high rank would be sentenced—here again the haunting vision of the convict transport-packet, and the penal colony, with their brutalized or demonized crew, and all their loathsome and revolting horrors, swam darkly in upon her brain.

"My God! my God! have mercy and let me die," escaped in stifled tones from her ashy lips.

"Estelle! my Estelle! be calm, be strong, be hopeful! See they are about to call you. Call thou on Him who once stood, as you are now about to stand, before man's uncertain tribunal, to be judged by man's often erring wisdom. Call thou on Him!" said Lord Montressor, earnestly as he arose, took her hand, drew her arm within his own, and attended by Mr. Oldfield, and followed by the eyes of all the people that thronged to suffocation the court room, led her up to the bar, set a chair, seated her there, and placed himself beside her. The aged minister stood on the other side; he stooped and whispered:

"When you rise, my child, do not wait for the order of the court, but unvail at once; the innocent need not conceal her brow of truth."

The indictment was then read, and the accused was ordered to rise and hold up her hand.

Estelle arose, and Lord Montressor reverentially drew aside her vail, revealing her pale, despairing, but most beautiful face. The crowd was behind her. Thus fortunately she had only to confront the bench. The Judge bent forward and looked with interest into the grief-stricken, but lovely countenance thus unvailed before him. Under his scrutiny, her eyes sank to the floor, and her color rose, crimsoning her cheek even to her temples, and then receding

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left her paler than before. All this passed in an instant And then—

"Prisoner, you have heard the indictment against you read. Are you guilty or not guilty of the crime laid to your charge?" asked the judge.

"Not guilty in intention, my lord," answered the low, thrilling voice of the accused.

"You may resume your seat."

Lord Montressor, with a deferential tenderness that never failed or faltered, handed her back to her chair, and took his stand on her right hand as before.

And so perfect was the silence among the eager, attentive crowd, that not only the questions of the Judge, but every syllable of her low-toned reply was distinctly heard in every part of the court room.

The multitude had now pressed as near as was permitted to the bench, and many on either side were in a line of vision with the accused. And among them were many of her old associates, now gazing at her in pitiless curiosity. Fain would she have intervened the friendly black lace vail again between her face and the eyes of the assembly, though in respect to her friends' opinions she abstained from the self indulgence; but oh! those eyes! those cruel eyes! she felt them like a forest of leveled bayonets, pointed toward her—impaling her.

The counsel for the Crown arose, and amid the profound silence of the court, opened the prosecution. I cannot in my limited space give a just idea of the logic, eloquence and power of this preliminary speech.

It became his painful duty, he said, to prosecute one of the most extraordinary cases that the annals of English crime had ever recorded before an English tribunal. The prisoner at the bar was known—either personally, or by fame, to most persons there present She had been a lady by birth, wealth and education, holding position among the

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highest in the realm; a lady distinguished for rank and fortune, celebrated for her exceeding beauty and accomplished genius; *such she had been.* Now, alas! she was no less distinguished for her discovered depravity, daring and duplicity! They knew that she had been successful in fashionable, aristocratic, and even in royal circles; he would now show that she had, until recently, been equally successful in her course of concealed guilt. He would give a synopsis of her career, stating facts that he should prove by competent witnesses present in this court. He should commence with her school life, showing the gentlemen of the jury the precocious depravity with which at the early age of fourteen she had deceived her fond, indulgent parents, deluded her excellent teacher, and ensnared a young gentleman into a secret marriage, soon as lightly broken as it had been made; the wantonness with which she had abandoned her youthful bridegroom, driving him to despair and desperation, that soon ended in the wreck of his fortune and character; the duplicity with which through ten long years she had concealed the fact of her first marriage from her parents and friends; and the wickedness with which she had, just one month since, entrapped the heart and hand of a noble lord here present, and who was the second victim of this modern Messalina!

At this degrading peroration, the blood rushed to Lord Montressor's brow—he started forward with a flashing eye and a raised hand—but, then recollecting himself and his surroundings, he made a powerful effort, controlled himself. and with the air of a man who bides his time, retreated to his stand.

Estelle, a novice to the forms and usages of courts of law, heard all the enormous charges, the atrocious wickedness officially imputed to her by the prosecutor, and sat, with pallid features and fixed stare, like a woman appalled to marble

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Lord Dazzleright stooped and spoke to her.

"You should know, Lady Montressor, that this is merely an *official* tirade, a professional affair—it means nothing, makes no impression. The Judge don't believe him, the jury don't believe him, he don't believe himself. He is only repeating the prosecutor's usual raw-head and bloody bones formula of—

'Fe, faw, fum—I smell the blood of an Englishman.'

No more than just that."

But Estelle did not understand nor hear, nor ever once withdraw her stony gaze, that seemed caught up and spell-bound to the face of her terrible accuser. At length, however, the dreadful voice ceased to declaim, and gave the counsel for the defense an opportunity of answering. But as Lord Dazzleright declined replying for the present, reserving his defense, the prosecutor proceeded to call the witnesses for the crown.

It would be tedious to recapitulate the testimony, which the reader has already heard given at the investigation before the magistrate. The same witnesses, namely: Madame Gabrielle L'Orient and the Abbe Pierre Le Roux, were successively called, and testified to the same fact, to wit, that of the marriage that had been performed between Victoire L'Orient and Estelle Morelle at the church of St. Etienne, Paris, on the thirteenth day of November, eighteen hundred and ——. They also identified the prisoner at the bar and Victoire L'Orient as the contracting parties in that ceremony. These witnesses were in turn subjected to a severe cross-examination by Lord Dazzleright, but without effect. The duplicity and cunning of the little old Frenchwoman was at least a match for the legal acumen of the best lawyer in the three kingdoms. A host of witnesses were present, ready to testify to the well-known fact of the so-called "felonious" marriage rites that had been celebrated on the

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first day of May last, at the parish church of Hyde, in the county of Devon, between Estelle, wife of Victoire L'Orient, and George Charles, Lord Viscount Montressor. But a few of these were needed to establish this point. And here the prosecuting attorney rested his case. Lord Dazzzle-right arose for the defense.

All eyes were turned upon him—he was a man of distinguished presence, as well as of brilliant genius. Amid the deepest silence and the profoundest attention, he commenced his speech.

"My Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury:—The charge made against my client by the learned counsel for the crown,—imposing as it seems, and sustained as it is by competent witnesses,—is really so unsubstantial, as to be easily overthrown, by reference to a single fact,—as it is no doubt *already* invalided in the estimation of your lordship, of the jury, and of all within the sound of my voice, by the simple *recollection* of that fact;—to wit: that the statute laws of France as well as those of England, regard a minor of fourteen years of age as an *infant* in the law, and incapable of contracting marriage without the knowledge and consent of his or her parents or guardians. Therefore, the quasi marriage ceremony celebrated between the man Victoire L'Orient and the infant Estelle Morelle, in the Catholic chapel of St. Etienne, Paris, on the thirteenth day of November, eighteen hundred and —— *was*, and *is*, completely invalid and of none effect, and could therefore form no obstacle to the nuptials solemnized between Estelle Morelle and the Lord Viscount Montressor at the parish church of Hyde on the first of May ultimo. This fact is so well understood by all here present, that I need not dwell upon the point any longer than to remind your lordship and the jury that this *is*, *of itself*, all-sufficient for the *legal* acquittal of my client.

"But, my lord and gentlemen, I wish to be understood

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as standing here, *not only* in the character of an advocate of a client,—whom I consider as having been presented and indicted upon untenable grounds, and whom I feel assured stands already fully acquitted before you, *but also* as the champion of a deeply-injured and most unhappy, though most estimable lady, whose high moral and intellectual excellencies can only be equaled in degree by her cruel wrongs and great sufferings,—a lady whose hand and fortune, while yet she was an infant, became the objects of a foul conspiracy, and whose fair name is now the target of the sharpest arrows of calumny. My lord and gentlemen, the proved invalidity of that first quasi marriage suffices to clear my client before the *court*. It is, therefore, to acquit her before the *tribunal of public opinion*, that I stand here and proceed to make a statement of facts, every one which I pledge myself to establish by witnesses of unquestionable probity."

Here the learned advocate commenced and gave in detail the sorrowful history of Estelle's school life as it is already known to the reader. His earnestness, his eloquence and graphic delineation of the wrongs and sufferings of the beautiful woman who sat there waiting her doom, in death-like stillness,—in turn flushed every cheek with indignation, or filled every eye with tears. In the course of his speech he said—in answer to the false and totally unfounded assumptions of the prosecuting attorney, and to silence forever those who from any cause might be disposed to cavil,—he should state and prove, that, illegal as was that quasi marriage, it had been entered upon in perfectly good faith by his client. She supposed it valid and binding; infant as she was, she believed herself a wife. And most wretched as that false marriage proved, and deeply repented as it was, *she* had remained, in every respect scrupulously faithful to its supposed obligations. Yes, faithful not only for the ten months that she lived and suffered under the cruel

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despotism of her *soi disant* husband, but after that,—when the penal laws of France had sent him a convict to Algiers, for the ten years of separation, and the two years of supposed widowhood. She had borne her burden *alone*, until in due course of time her betrothal to a certain noble peer, here present, made it right and proper that she should confide to him the fact of the previous union, then supposed to be broken by death.

I have thus given but a skeleton of Lord Dazzleright's address—would I could infuse into it the fullness, force, and vitality of the original.

He finished amid a breathless silence, and proceeded to call his witnesses. They were not many, but had been selected with the greatest care. The advocate had been very busy during the interval of the past month, and had spared neither time, labor, nor expense, in collecting and consolidating testimony. He had drawn from his client's native county, witnesses of the very highest standing, to give testimony upon the exemplary piety of her life and manners, and he had dispatched a confidential agent to the Chief of Police at Paris, to procure his assistance in hunting up the employees who had been in the service of Madame L'Orient, at the time of the disgraceful breaking up of her "Pensionat," and in selecting such as were most competent to give evidence in this case. These were now in court, and were successively called to the stand. Their united testimony harmonized perfectly, and corroborated the statements of the advocate. They were in turn severely cross-examined by the king's counsel; but the more their testimony was tried, the stronger it was proved. The advocate here rested the defense.

The Judge then arose to review the case, sum up the evidence, and charge the jury.

His lordship's exposition of the law and the testimony, in his instructions, might be considered a virtual acquittal

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of the prisoner. It was like the usual charges of Sir James Allan Parke—short, clear, and pointed.

"Gentlemen of the Jury, you have heard the charge upon which the prisoner at the bar stands arraigned, and which has been clearly set forth by the counsel for the crown, and well sustained by the witnesses he has produced. You have also heard how that charge has been met and answered by the counsel for the prisoner. The fact of two marriages having taken place under the circumstances set forth, is fully established by testimony. The learned advocate for the accused rests his defense upon the alleged invalidity of the first marriage. Now, upon the validity or invalidity of that marriage, this court has no authority to pronounce judgment, the adjudication of such matters belongs, exclusively, to the Spiritual Court of Arches. If the first marriage was invalid, it would form no obstacle to the second marriage, which in such case would not be illegal. And if, on the other hand, the first marriage was perfectly valid, the second marriage would be illegal; but not necessarily *felonious*. Intention is the soul of crime. From the evidence before you, if you find that the prisoner at the bar, upon the occasion of solemnizing marriage with Lord Montressor, knew, or had good and sufficient cause to believe that she had already a husband living—it will be your duty to convict her. If, on the other hand, you find that she knew, or had good and sufficient reason to believe herself legally free to contract the said marriage, it becomes your duty to acquit her. To this single point is drawn the question. You are to judge upon it, and render your verdict accordingly."

The Judge ceased and resumed his seat.

The jury retired under the conduct of the sheriff's officer, to another room to deliberate.

Then the spell of breathless silence that had bound the

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spectators was dissolved. They breathed and spoke—a buzz of voices filled the room.

As for Estelle, she changed not from the frozen, stony look into which she had been at first appalled by the official abuse of the crown's counsel.

Lord Montressor stooped and whispered to her,—

"My own Estelle, courage! courage for a few moments longer! and then all will be over; all will be well! You are already more than acquitted, you are justified, you are vindicated."

"Oh, I know, I know all!" replied a sepulchral voice, that Lord Montressor scarcely recognized as belonging to his silver-tongued Estelle.

In a moment, silence fell again like death upon the court-room. It was produced by the opening of a door, and the appearance of the bailiff, ushering in the jury. They advanced to their place. The foreman stood before the Judge. Not a breath was drawn, scarcely a pulse beat in that crowded court-room for the space of a minute, during which the Judge inquired:

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed upon your verdict?"

"We have, my lord," answered the foreman.

"What say you, then, is the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?"

"NOT GUILTY, my lord."

"Lady Montressor is discharged from custody," said the Judge.

A low deep murmur of satisfaction ran through the crowd. The old minister seized the hand of his protege, and burst into tears of joy. Lord Montressor grasped that of Lord Dazzleright in warm acknowledgment of his services, and congratulation of his success, and then instantly turned to his bride.

His attention was too late—she had fainted on the arm

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of the old clergyman—she who had firmly borne up under the horrors of the past month, had now succumbed and sunk, and lay like a statue fallen from its pedestal.

"Lady Montressor is discharged from custody," repeated the clerk of the court, somewhat impatiently.

She looked indeed as though she were discharged not only from the court, but from the earth—so still, so white, so lifeless!

"Raise her in your arms, Montressor: take her into the sheriff's room. I will show you the way," said Lord Dazzleright, bending anxiously over her fainting form.

At this moment, also, Susan Copsewood, her maid, who had been somewhere among the spectators, succeeded in pushing her way through the crowd, and reaching the side of her mistress.

Lord Montressor raised Estelle with care, and, preceded by Lord Dazzleright, bore her from the court-room into the sheriff's office, where he laid her on the sofa, dropped upon one knee by her side, and began to rub and chafe her hands, and invoke her by every fond epithet and hopeful word to awake—arise! Such restoratives as could be first procured were brought and applied, and with such good effect that, after a little while, a shudder passed through her frame, her breast heaved, her face quivered—she sighed, and opened her eyes. Her glance met the anxious, earnest gaze of Lord Montressor bent upon her. She sighed again, and dropped her eyelids.

"Stella! my Stella! my bride! my wife! rouse yourself, dearest! You are acquitted, you are justified," said Lord Montressor, anxiously seeking to restore her. "You are vindicated—you are free!"

"Free! free! oh God!" she cried, so despairingly, so incoherently, with a countenance so blanched and convulsed with anguish, that her friends drew near and gazed upon her in as much astonishment as alarm.

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"Compose yourself, sweet Stella," murmured Lord Montressor, siting down beside her, and gently smoothing away the beautiful, dishevelled black ringlets from her cold and clammy forehead. "Sweet love, be calm."

"I will, I am," she said, trying to control the motions of her quivering and ashen lips. Then gently putting aside his caressing hand, and rising upon her elbow, she inquired:

"But tell me, you, why was I acquitted, while all the other prisoners, who had been arraigned before me, were convicted? Did my father's, my friends', and my——Lord Montressor's rank and wealth, and power, thrown into the scales of justice, tilt the balance in my favor? Had I only this advantage over other wretches?" she asked, fixing her dark eyes, querulous with suffering, upon the distressed face of the old clergyman.

"No, no, my child! This was not so. This would not have been so, of course. English law is no respecter of persons, and English courts are as incorruptible by wealth as they are undismayed by power. You owe your acquittal solely to your guiltlessness."

"What!" she cried, fixing her wild, dilated eyes upon the old man's face, "was it not *true*, then?"

"Was not *what* true, my child?"

"That which the king's counsel said of me?"

"Assuredly not! The king's counsel himself did not believe the words that he spoke—his speech was a mere official form. Compose yourself, my child."

"Oh, I will do so. I am composed; but hist!" she said, sinking her voice to a whisper: "did they make me out to be my lord's wife?"

"Assuredly, my child, and you are in strict law the wife of Lord Montressor; though the Judge of the Assizes, as well as he knew that fact, had no authority to pronounce upon it."

"Oh God! my God!" she cried, wringing her hands

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"Be calm, my child; do not let that omission distress you, for though the Judge had no authority to give judgment upon an affair that belonged exclusively to the ecclesiastic courts, yet neither was his judgment needed. We all know now, as we knew before, that you are really and truly the wife of Lord Montressor. Have we not, ever since your marriage, addressed you only by his name?"

"Lord! my Lord!" she cried, still twisting and wringing her white fingers.

"Why, Estelle, my child, what ails you? Have you borne up through all the trial to sink at last in the hour of your triumph?"

"Triumph, was it? Oh! Lord in heaven! Lord of pity!"

"Estelle! Estelle!"

"You said that I was truly the wife of Lord Montressor?"

"Undoubtedly, my child!"

"Then it was the wife of Lord Montressor who was this day tried for ——Saints in heaven! I cannot name the charge!" She groaned, with the sweat of agony bursting from her icy brow.

"Estelle," said Lord Montressor, now seating himself by her side and taking her hand—"you are ill—nervous. This is nothing new, nothing that we have not known for a month past, why then should it distress you?"

"Ah, my lord! but it is! for I did not mind what they out of pity called me! I called my lost self Estelle L'Orient! I thought it was Estelle L'Orient who was to be tried upon that degrading charge! And had it been Estelle L'Orient, it had not signified! But that the wife of the Viscount Montressor should suffer this degradation—oh! angels in heaven! it is terrible!—it is terrible!"

"Estelle, you rave! pray try, for our sakes, to control yourself, love!"

"But they spoke falsely—falsely! It *was* Estelle L'Orient

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who was tried for —— what I cannot speak! It was *Estelle L'Orient*, and no other! *Your* honorable name, my lord, was never dragged down through such mire!—it remains clear of blame!—none bearing it ever came to shame!"

"Assuredly not! and none have borne it more blamelessly than my beloved Stella; but, dear one, you talk so wildly that you had best not speak at all—come! drink this, and then lie down and be quiet for a few minutes," he said, placing to her lips a glass of ice-water that had just been brought in by her maid. She quaffed it, but instead of lying down, she straightened her figure up, put up her hands and pushed the overshadowing black ringlets from her brow, and said:

"Yes—I will—I must control myself. There! I am calmer now. Am I not, my friends?"

"Yes—the water has done you good. You are better, but you must rest a little while."

"No—let us leave this place—I shall recover sooner without its walls."

"As you please, then, love! Let your maid rearrange your dress. Our traveling-carriage waits, and the afternoon wanes; yet before the moon rises over the hills of Dorset, I would welcome you to your new home—Montressor Castle," said his lordship, affectionately busying himself in tying her little bonnet, and tucking in her stray ringlets.

"Ah! *would you?*—would you take Estelle to your ancestral home, where never a dishonored woman trod before?"

"Estelle! you almost anger me, love! do not talk so insanely!" said his lordship. But she had dropped her hands idly upon her lap, and with her gaze fastened abstractedly upon them, had fallen into a deep reverie that lasted several minutes, and might have lasted indefinitely longer, had not Lord Montressor gently recalled her atten-

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tion to the necessity of departure. She started like one aroused from sleep—passed her hand once or twice across her brow, and then answered in a voice, strange and unnatural from its level monotone:

"Lord Montressor, will you please to excuse me for to-night? I am not equal to the journey you propose."

"My dearest, the distance is but nine miles over the loveliest of roads, and in the easiest of carriages," replied his lordship, encouragingly.

"No doubt, no doubt; yet I cannot take the road to-day."

"Very well! As you please, dearest! I will then convey you to the 'Royal Adelaide,' the best and quietest little hotel in Exeter, where we can remain until you are thoroughly rested and restored. Will that plan suit my Stella?"

"You exhibit an angel's goodness to me, my lord, and I must tax it still further! Listen! and pray do not misconceive me! I am not ungrateful; but—the scenes of the last month have so severely tried me—that even now, when I am acquitted, I cannot pass from the contemplation of the horrors that filled my mind and threatened my future, at once to the enjoyment of the security of your protection, and the blessedness of your love! I need a short interval of solitude, isolation, self-communion and prayer, before I dare enter the Eden you open to me! Suffer me, therefore, my dearest lord, to return, as heretofore, under the charge of our reverend friend to my apartment at the 'Crown and Sceptre.'"

"And then?"

"We shall meet again."

"To-morrow?"

"You may come and inquire for me, to-morrow noon."

"Estelle! do you really feel this interval to be necessary to your convenience?"

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"It is vitally necessary to my *peace* and *sanity*, I think, my lord."

"Be it so, then! I cannot object, nor will I reproach you, my Stella, cruel as I feel this delay to be. Shall I attend you to your hotel?"

"If you will not think me ungrateful, I prefer that you should take leave of me, as heretofore, at my carriage door."

"Well! I will obey my lady's behests, however unacceptable they may be, and that without cavilling," said his lordship. "But I may come to you to-morrow, you said?"

"Come to-morrow, my lord."

Estelle expressed herself now ready to depart. Mr. Oldfield arose and gave her his arm. Lord Montressor walked by her side, and attended her into the street and to the carriage.

"Farewell, until we meet, dear Stella," he said, as he placed her in the carriage.

"Aye! until we meet! Farewell, my lord," she answered solemnly—how solemnly he afterward remembered—lifting her eyes to his countenance with a momentary, deep, earnest, thrilling gaze, as though she would make and receive an impression that should last through life!

Lord Montressor lifted her hand to his lips, bowed, and retired to give place to Mr. Oldfield, who entered the carriage, took the seat beside Estelle, and gave orders to the coachman to drive on.

The streets were still thronged with people, waiting for that carriage to pass, in hope of getting a sight of one whose name, for praise or blame, was now on every tongue.

"An honorable acquittal is assuredly the next worst thing to a conviction!" thought Mr. Oldfield, as he nervously let down the inner curtains to screen his companion from the vulgar gaze.

They finally reached their inn, the neighborhood of which

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was peopled by an expectant crowd, waiting to see their arrival.

Mr. Oldfield wrapped her vail closely around the head of his charge, handed her out of the carriage, and led her quickly into the house, and up to their private parlor. As soon as they had reached this apartment, Estelle turned to her venerable friend, and said in a low voice:

"Mr. Oldfield, send the servants away; I wish to have a private conversation with you immediately."

The good clergyman complied. When they were alone, she threw back her vail, and said in an earnest, solemn voice:

"Mr. Oldfield! you are a Christian minister! help me to do my duty!"

"Your *duty*, Lady Montressor?" repeated the clergyman, in a perplexed, misgiving, and questioning tone.

"Aye, my duty! my difficult—my dreadful duty!"

"I confess I do not understand you, Lady Montressor!"

"I will explain! I must withdraw myself at once and forever from Lord Montressor's neighborhood and knowledge!"

"My child, you are certainly mad!"

"Would I were!—but no! listen! That first marriage of mine may not have been a *legal* obstacle; but it is, nevertheless, an insurmountable *moral* obstacle to my union with any other man! And oh! amid all the gloom, and terror, and desolation of my life, I do rejoice and thank God for one signal blessing! that I was arrested immediately, on leaving the church, so that I lived not one moment as a wife with Lord Montressor! and not one moment must I so live with him! I must fly while there is yet time!"

"My child, my dear Estelle, you distress me beyond measure by this rash resolution."

"It is not a sudden determination! Ah, no! A month ago, as soon as I recovered from the shock of my arrest

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and collected my scattered faculties together, I thought of it, pondered over it, prayed over it, and *decided* upon it—long before the court had rendered judgment upon it. Had I been convicted, that conviction would have virtually released Lord Montressor. But I am acquitted, and I must by my own act release him. I ask you as a Christian minister to assist me in this duty."

"But, I am very much perplexed! You are certainly in *law* the wife of Lord Montressor.

"But not in right."

"How do you propose to release him?"

"By leaving the country; he will then in time forget me."

"He never can!"

"He must and will."

"And then——?"

"An act of Parliament will release him from the bond of a merely nominal marriage."

The aged pastor did not reply, but sank into painful thought, broken by occasional groans.

At length, Estelle resumed—

"You have heard my plan—will you assist me in it?"

"No, Lady Montressor, I dare not."

"Why not?"

"Because I doubt it would be wrong to do so. It would be treachery on my part toward Lord Montressor, whose legal wife you are!"

"Oh! would to God I were indeed his rightful wife! Oh! would to God I were! But that I am not so—that I cannot be so, while Victoire L'Orient lives, you, a Christian minister, should know full well!" cried Estelle, passionately.

"Lady Montressor, I consider your conscience morbid upon this subject. Monsieur Victoire L'Orient has not the shadow of a claim to your hand You never were his wife!' said the minister solemnly.

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Estelle grew paler than ever she had been before, and fixing her eyes steadily upon the face of her venerable friend, she slowly inquired—

"And if, as you say, I never was the wife of Victoire L'Orient—*what then was I to him?*"

The good old pastor winced and fidgetted, but at last replied—

"His innocent victim!"

"'His innocent victim!' And think you, then, that this 'victim' of Monsieur Victoire L'Orient is a fit and proper consort for the Right Honorable, the Viscount Montressor?"

"Madam, his lordship thinks so."

Slowly and sadly Estelle shook her head—

"No, Mr. Oldfield! he is a moral hero—and he loves the poor woman before you. He would risk name, rank, and social influence—every thing, save true honor, to rescue her from the slough of despond into which she has fallen. He would be the Curtius to throw himself into the yawning abyss opened in my life."

"Lady Montressor, you are wrong upon this subject! You accuse yourself too bitterly. Reflect! your sole error in this affair was a thoughtless disregard of your filial relations. Even that fault, I am constrained to say, was very much palliated by the circumstances in which you were placed—from earliest infancy under the sole charge and absolute rule of an artful and unscrupulous woman. You were the victim, I repeat, of a pair of accomplished villains—mother and son. As far as your part in that *quasi* marriage went, you acted in good faith, you believed the proceeding to be a lawful one. If that marriage was illegal and has been vacated, you are not to be blamed; the fault was not yours. History and biography record many cases in which, under like circumstances, the marriage even of kings and queens have been dissolved, or rather pro

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nounced invalid from the beginning, and the parties have been left free to contract second matrimonial engagements. Lord Montressor, I am sure, takes this view of the subject."

Again and more mournfully Estelle shook her head.

"Ah, Mr. Oldfield! My lord thinks only of me—but I—I think of *him*, and of what he will have to bear for my sake!" Then breaking into passionate sorrow, she exclaimed—"Once, and long before he ever had the misfortune to look upon this fatal face of mine—wherever he appeared, his presence spread a certain festive gladness, like the coming of a hero or the shining of the sun! 'That is LORD MONTRESSOR,' would cry one exulting voice! 'Where?' would question a dozen eager tones and glances! 'There! there! that tall man, with the kingly brow and saintly smile! That is he! you cannot mistake him!' would reply those who knew his person. For every one knew his *name*. And *then* all eyes turned upon him in admiration and worship!—But *now!* but *now!* how different, oh my God! Listen what he may have to bear and I may have to hear! We go into public—into church, festive hall or mart,—it does not matter which!—some busybody, who knows his face whispers 'That is Lord Montressor.' 'What! he who married that woman who was tried before the Assizes?' asks one. 'What! he who took away another man's bride?' inquires another. (For so many will view it! So soon are good deeds forgotten, so little it requires to distort facts, and take away an honorable man's good name.) But no! no! no! no! they shall not have this thing to say of my lord!—of my dear, dear and honored lord! whose name shall shine unclouded among the stars!—for whose good and happiness I would willingly become——what would I *not* become? The dust of the earth that all men trample—if that could raise *him* higher, or make him happier! I will go away, far away, he shall not know whither! He shall never hear of me again! I shall be dead to him!

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An act of Parliament will set him free from the bond of our nominal union. Then the most that the bitterest caviller can say, will be—'That is Lord Montressor who married Miss Morelle, that was tried at Exeter! Happily he divorced her, before the marriage was consummated.' In time the caviller will forget to say even so much; as in time Lord Montressor will also forget his lost Estelle, and be happy!"

"Happy? he! Lord Montressor! My child, from my own observations of the past month, I feel assured that Lord Montressor will never find happiness in forgetfulness of you!"

"He must and shall! I will, in my retirement, besiege Heaven with prayers for his peace! Did ever a woman wear out her days and nights with prayers that the husband whom she loves, may cease to love and may forget her? So will I pray, and so shall my lord find peace! But we lose precious time! Say! will you aid me to leave this place secretly?"

"Assuredly not, Lady Montressor."

"And is this your ultimatum?"

"Absolutely, Lady Montressor."

"Mr. Oldfield! are you then a Christian minister, or are you only the incumbent of Bloomingdale?" asked the lady, in sorrowful bitterness of spirit.

"I humbly trust that I am a Christian minister; but not therefore a fanatic, Lady Montressor."

"And do you think it a Christian act to refuse to aid me in my conscientious withdrawal from Lord Montressor?"

"I take the part of law and order, my lady, and such I think the duty of every Christian."

"And I—take the part of God and—war, if need be—choose martyrdom if need be! Good-night, *most Christian minister!*" said Lady Montressor, rising to leave the room

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Good-night, my child. You are sarcastic; but I do not deserve it. You will sleep on this; and to-morrow you will think better of it and me. God bless and comfort you, my child. Good-night," said the old man, very mildly.

Estelle smiled mournfully, ironically, as she passed to the door; but while her hand rested upon the lock, her heart relented—repented—she turned back, went to the side of her venerable friend, took his aged hand, and said—

"Forgive my unkind words. Trouble makes me irritable and unjust—yes! and ungrateful! For you have been very good to me; when my father and my mother forsook me, *you* took me up; when I stood arraigned upon a criminal and degrading charge, *you* stood at my side, sustaining me. Do you think that I can ever forget, or be thankless to you? Oh, never! no! God bless and preserve you! God love you and reward you! Good-night! *Good-night!*" she cried, and pressed his hand fervently to her heart and lips—then dropped it, turned, and hurried from the room.

The good clergyman never looked upon her living face again.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE FLIGHT OF ESTELLE.

"Enough that we are parted—that there rolls,
A flood of headlong fate between our souls,
Whose darkness severs me as wide from thee,
As hell from heaven to all eternity!"—*Moore.*

"Yet! oh yet! thyself deceive not!
Love may sink by slow decay!
But by sudden wrench, believe not,
Hearts can thus be torn away."—*Byron.*

WHEN Lady Montressor reached her own apartment, she found her faithful attendant, Susan Copsewood, kneeling among the trunks, in the middle of the floor, busily engaged in packing them.

On hearing the door opened, Susan arose from her knees to receive and attend upon her mistress; but started and stood aghast on beholding the wild and haggard countenance of the lady. True, she had often seen that beauteous countenance darkened with the midnight of despair, or convulsed with a storm of passionate sorrow; and so she had no right to be amazed at any of its tempestuous changes; but she had never seen any thing like this—this half-insane, death-like look!

"Heaven and earth, my lady! what is it? What new misfortune? What can I do for you? Sit down, dear Madam—here!" she exclaimed, recovering her presence of mind sufficiently to enable her to draw forward an easy chair and place her mistress in it. Lady Montressor sank down into the seat and dropped her face upon her open hands, while her vail of long, black ringlets fell forward concealing them.

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"Lady—dear lady! What is the matter? What can I do for you?" pleaded Susan, kneeling by her mistress's side and looking up imploringly to her hidden face—"dear, dear lady, what can I do for you?—what is it?"

"Oh! nothing, nothing, Susan!"

"Forgive me, dear Madam, but you always say that! And this is not just *nothing*!"

"Susan ——?"

"My dearest mistress!"

"I think you *love* me?"

"Do you think the sun *warms* you, dear lady?"

"And I know you are *faithful* to me."

"If I were half as faithful to the Lord, I should be sure of Heaven, my lady."

"Hush! speak lower. Go and see if the passage is clear, and then lock the door."

Susan obeyed, and then returned and kneeled down by her mistress's side.

Lady Montressor dropped her hands from her agonized face, and looked down deeply into the honest, affectionate eyes that were lifted so imploringly to hers.

"Susan, I *know* you will be worthy of the great trust I am about to repose in you."

"Try me, Madam! try me! if it is a secret, they might put me on an old-time rack and wrench and screw my limbs until their own limbs ached with the labor, and they'd never screw any thing out of my lips that was put into my heart by your ladyship!"

"I do believe you speak sincerely; but your fidelity will not be put to so severe a test, Susan," said Lady Montressor. Then, after a thoughful pause, during which she sat with her head resting wearily on her hand, and her eyes fixed upon the floor, she suddenly looked up and said—

"Susan, I must go to London to-night."

"Madam! My lady!" exclaimed the girl in consternation

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"I must depart in secret, and alone," continued Lady Montressor, while Susan gazed with no abatement of surprise and anxiety.

"*You* will, therefore, have to make all necessary arrangements for me."

"But, Madam—but, my dearest mistress——"

"Be silent, dear girl, or rather listen to me, and answer my questions. When does the Bristol train go?"

"At twelve to-night, and at six in the morning, Madam."

"I must go by the night train. How far is the depot from this house, Susan?"

"At least a mile, my lady."

"What o'clock is it now?"

"It has just struck eight, Madam."

"No later? good! We can complete all necessary arrangements in three hours, and I can leave here by eleven and reach the depot in time. Go now, dear girl, and engage a hackney-coach to be in readiness.—No! that would never do—that would betray me. I must walk the distance."

"Dear, dear lady, you could never walk it—never!"

"Yes, I am able. I shall walk," said Lady Montressor, so calmly and resolutely, that her maid dared not pursue the argument; but looking at her mistress through eyes obscured with tears, she said—

"Dear, dear lady, you keep on saying 'I,' and 'I,' 'I can leave,' and 'I shall walk,' as if—as if—as if—oh!——" cried Susan, suddenly breaking down and sobbing aloud.

Her mistress gazed upon her in calm surprise, while she sobbed and caught her breath, and sobbed again, struggling through the fit into composure. Then when the girl, with a few ebbing, little sobs, wiped her eyes, Lady Montressor said—

"Now then, Susan, why do you grieve?"

The question nearly set Susan off again, but she valiantly

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slaughtered a sob with a hiccough, and answered, rather accusatively, by saying—

"You keep on repeating 'I' and 'I' as if—as if—you were going to leave me behind."

"What! do you wish to go with me, Susan?"

"Oh! my lady."

"But I am about to leave England—to leave all my past, easy and pleasant life behind, and to go into retirement in some foreign country."

"Well, my lady! what have I done to deserve to be cast off and left behind?"

"Nothing ill, have you done, my dear girl! but do you really wish to leave your native country, your home and friends, and attach yourself to the doubtful fortunes of a hapless fugitive like your mistress?"

"Dear lady, I have neither father nor mother—nor any one to love and serve but *you*——"

"I will leave a letter with you for Mr. Oldfield, who will procure you a better home than I could ever give you."

"It isn't *that*," said Susan, with a certain quiet self-respect. "I would get homes enough, dear lady; but——"

"But what?"

"I wish to go with *you*. I love you, my lady. I would follow you to the world's end!"

"If you follow me, it may even be to that extent, dear girl!" said Lady Montressor, extending her hand to Susan, who caught and covered it with kisses.

"I may go, your ladyship?"

"It is only for your own sake I hesitate, to say—yes, Susan."

The girl chose to hear only the two last words of Lady Montressor's reply, and arose with alacrity to wait her next orders

"You may put up a change of clothing in a small packet—that will be sufficient for me. The trunks must be left

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here for the present—to take them with us would be to blazon our journey By the way, how came they all open, and in the middle of the floor?" said Lady Montressor, noticing for the first time the confusion of the room.

"Pardon, my lady. But when we were leaving the court room, his lordship—Lord Montressor I mean, said to me—'Susan, my good child, hasten home and pack your lady's trunks before she shall have time to get there, so that she shall not be incommoded and fatigued by the confusion.' And I was doing it, your ladyship, not expecting you in so soon."

"Oh, the dear! the kind! the ever-thoughtful! Oh, *my lord! my lord!*" murmured Estelle in low, inaudible, heart-broken tones, as this little instance of Lord Montressor's ever-considerate love touched her heart.

"Dear lady, you are not well! You have taken no rest and no refreshment since morning. Let me undress you; lie down and rest, while I go and order something for you."

"I cannot! Oh, I cannot, Susan!"

"But Lady Montressor——"

"Do not teaze me, dear girl! I can neither eat nor sleep."

"But how then will your ladyship have strength to reach the cars?"

"Truly! that is well put! I thank you, Susan, for reminding me. Well, well, if I must take something, go order a cup of coffee, it will be sufficient."

"And, dear lady, won't you lie down and sleep, while I go and have it prepared?"

"Well, well, my girl, to please you I will lie down, whether I can sleep or not," replied Lady Montressor, who then arose and permitted her maid to loosen her dress and arrange her comfortably upon the couch where she laid down, but not to *sleep!* not even to *rest!* There was no rest for that tempest-tost soul.

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Susan closed the blinds, let down the curtains, and having thus darkened the chamber, stole out to do her errand.

And Lady Montressor, after many hours of excitement, found herself in the calm of solitude. Alone! but alone with her heart! alone with her Tempter! She had thought the moral struggle over, the victory won, the Tempter fled! But ah! no sooner did she find herself thus alone, than the Evil spirit, in his fairest guise, reappeared to her, beset her, arrayed before her tearless, burning eyes and bleeding heart, the loveliness of the life she was leaving, the desolation of the doom to which she was departing! Ah! how difficult, how cruel, how insupportable the duty, to turn away from native country, from home, from friends, and more than all from *him*—from *him*, and go out sorrowing, alone and exposed, into the wide, bleak, dreary, desolate world! It was like going into the "outer darkness" spoken of in the Scriptures! To go far away, out of his knowledge, and out of his reach! never again to meet his dear familiar eyes and smile! never again to hear one tone of his beloved voice! never to expect his coming or listen for his step! never to get a letter from him and never to write one! never to hear of him again in the whole course of her life! —never! never! How insufferable, while yet living, thus to die away from his knowledge, to die to him! It was like being buried alive! like going with her warm young blood, and loving heart, and thinking brain, down, down into the grave, to be smothered under the stifling clods of the earth!

"I cannot do it! I cannot! Oh, God! it is too much! too much!" she cried, wringing her pale fingers in the extremity of anguish. The Tempter, ever watchful to take advantage of our weakest moment, whispered—That she need not do it! that she was not required thus to immolate her rich, warm young life! to leave *him* bereaved! She was free to love him forever! for was he not her legal hus

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band? She could fold her spirit's bruised and weary wings and nestle down sweetly into his home and heart, held open to enfold her! The temptation was invincible, irresistible! it drew her soul onward with a mighty magnetism.

"I faint—I yield—Oh, God! my God! come to aid! save, or I perish!" she cried, and suddenly lost all consciousness!

A strange vision passed before her spirit. She was in the heart of a vast and dense forest whose tall, dark trees encircled and nodded over the banks of a lake of crystal clearness and unfathomable depth. She stood, frightened, and despairing, she knew not wherefore, until looking down into the dark, transparent waters, she beheld her husband, Lord Montressor, sinking, drowning! With a cry of desolation, she was about to cast herself into the lake, when she felt herself gently held back, and looking over her shoulder, she beheld a man of celestial presence, arrayed in flowing white garments, standing behind her, holding her by his left hand, while his right hand was lifted toward Heaven in a gesture of supreme majesty! Full of awe her gaze followed his index, and she beheld high in the Heavens, the ascending form of her husband. And so she understood that it was but the *reflected image* of the ascending form, that she had mistaken for her husband sinking in the water! "And thus," said the celestial Mentor —"the apparent perishing of the beautiful hopes of earth is but the inverted reflection of their translation to Heaven!"

With this vision before her, with this voice in her ears, she gently opened her eyes—restored to full consciousness. How quiet after the tempest of emotion, was now her soul, how patient her spirit—how short and unreal, mortal and visible life seemed; how real and eternal the invisible and spiritual! Her whole being was calmed, and strengthened and elevated. Her first waking thoughts were prayers for

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courage, for fortitude! for oh! withal she needed a martyr's firmness and heroism, to persevere and tread unflinchingly the dread path of duty she had chosen.

Presently her maid stole in on tip-toe, and cautiously approached the couch.

"I am not sleeping, Susan, child. You may ring and order lights," the lady said.

Susan obeyed. And when lights were brought and Susan could see her mistress's face,—

"You are better, my lady," she said, cheerfully.

"I am better, Susan," replied Lady Montressor, rising and suffering her attendant to bathe her face and hands, and comb her hair and arrange her dress. When these toilet services were rendered, the maid rang again and was answered by the waiter, who made his appearance with a tray of refreshments for Lady Montressor.

Susan placed a sofa-table beside the couch upon which her ladyship reclined, arranged the viands upon it, and pressed her mistress to partake of them.

Lady Montressor forced herself to swallow a piece of bread and a few mouthfuls of coffee. Then pushing the salver from her, she said—

"There! take these things away, my girl, and go and get your supper, while I write two letters that must be left behind."

Susan did as she was ordered.

And Lady Montressor when left alone, went and sat down at her writing-table, and wrote—first, a short note of adieu, which she folded and directed to Mr. Oldfield.

Then she commenced a farewell letter to Lord Montressor. She poured out her whole heart and soul freely upon that paper!—page after page, sheet after sheet, was filled as her pen flew along the lines; her undying love, her terrible temptation, her agonizing struggle, her final, despairing renunciation—all, all, was poured forth with the living elo

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quence of a loving, despairing, impassioned heart! At last she paused, exhausted, and laid down her pen.

Had she finished? Had she poured forth all her burning brain thought?—all her bleeding heart felt?

Ah, no!—not a millionth part! And yet she had said too much! too much!

"Alas! how inconsistent I am! how weak," she said; "I practice self-denial at one point, and fall into self-indulgence at another! Why, to write *thus, to him*, is almost as wrong as to remain and live with him! For, oh! if I should send him this letter, showing him how much I love and suffer and despair, he will never resign me, never free himself and forget me and be happy! No, no, he would search for me over the world, and not finding me, would sit down in his 'chamber of desolation' to mourn me forever! That must not be! He must not know the anguish of this bosom. I must drink this cup of renunciation to the dregs, denying my heart even the sorowful consolation of writing to him;—save, perhaps, a few lines of friendly leave-taking."

She tore up her first and impassioned letter, and then she took a sheet of paper and wrote a short note of adieu, which she folded and directed.

A few minutes after this her maid returned to the room, and announced that her few preparations were complete, and that it was near eleven o'clock.

"Are *you* ready, Susan?"

"Yes, Madam," replied the girl, tying on her bonnet.

"Is the house quiet?"

"Our portion of it is, my lady."

"Very well, then. Now give me my cottage-bonnet and shawl.—Thank you. Now my thick vail and my gloves.—That is right. Have you the packet?

"Yes, Madam."

"We are ready, then, I believe?"

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"Yes, my lady," replied Susan; but still she lingered.

"Come, then, why do you loiter?"

"Forgive me, dear lady! but I knew you could not walk; besides, it is coming on to rain hard; so I took the liberty of going out and engaging a cab, that is to wait for us at the corner of the next square. Pray do not be uneasy, dear lady; the cabman knows nothing, but that he is to take two passengers to the cars."

"Well, well, my girl! you acted for the best, and I do not blame you, but thank you; and trust that your act may not lead to a premature discovery of our flight. Come, let us go," said Lady Montressor, and she placed the two letters in a conspicuous position on the mantle-piece, while Susan extinguished the lights.

They then left the chamber; Susan closed the door after them. And so Lady Montressor, attended by her faithful servant, went down the stairs, through the long passage, and out by the private door—out into the double darkness of the midnight and the tempest!

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE FORSAKEN.

"Though the world for this commend thee,
Though it smile upon the blow,
Even its praises must offend thee,
Founded on another's woe:

'Still thy heart its life retaineth—
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat;
And the undying thought which paineth
Is—that we no more may meet.

"Every feeling hath been shaken;
Pride, which not a world could bow
Bends to thee—by thee forsaken,
Even my soul forsakes me now."—*Byron.*

LORD MONTRESSOR arose early next morning, and devoted the whole forenoon to engaging a pleasant suite of rooms at the "Royal Adelaide," and in superintending their arrangement for the reception of his bride. The apartments were quite ready by eleven o'clock.

And a few minutes before twelve, Lord Montressor entered his carriage, and drove to the "Crown and Sceptre," to keep his appointment with Estelle.

He inquired for Lady Montressor, and was shown up at once into her private parlor, while the waiter took his card up to her ladyship's chamber. He waited impatiently for a few moments until the servant returned, with the information that neither Lady Montressor nor her woman was in her ladyship's room.

"That is strange," thought Lord Montressor. "Take this card up to Mr. Oldfield, and let him know that I would be happy to see him in this room," he said, handing the

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"pasteboard" to the waiter. The man received it and disappeared.

There was no suspicion nor misgiving in the impatience with which Lord Montressor waited for the appearance of Mr. Oldfield. He simply thought it unusual that Lady Montressor should not be ready to receive him, and wished to inquire for her of the minister. Presently the door opened, and Mr. Oldfield entered.

"Ah! how do you do, my dear friend? I hope Lady Montressor is well this morning?" said his lordship, advancing to meet the pastor.

"I hope so too, but Lady Montressor has not made her appearance to-day," said Mr. Oldfield.

"Indeed! and it is now," said his lordship, consulting the mantle clock, "half-past twelve"

"Her ladyship sometimes breakfasts and spends her mornings in her chamber, and as she was very much fatigued last night, probably she prefers to keep her own room to-day. Sit down, my lord! sit down! do not stand," said the minister, handing a chair to his visitor and seating himself.

"But, my dear sir, I sent up my card, and neither Lady Montressor nor her attendant is in her ladyship's apartment. I had hoped that my lady was with you."

"No, sir; no, no; I have seen neither Lady Montressor nor her maid this morning," said Mr. Oldfield, beginning to feel a vague uneasiness.

"This is a little unusual, is it not?" inquired his lordship.

"Eh?—yes! it *is*, my lord! *Very* unusual! I—think I will go up and see if—any thing is the matter!" gasped the old man in a great accession of uneasiness, as he hurriedly left the room to go in search of his charge.

Lord Montressor, being left alone, paced up and down the parlor floor until he was startled by the violent throwing open of the door, and the impetuous entrance of Mr.

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Oldfield, who pale and agitated held out two letters—one sealed, the other open and fluttering in his hand.

"What! what is the matter? Estelle! my Estelle! Is she ill? Has any thing happened to her? In the name of Heaven speak, Mr. Oldfield! What of my Estelle?" exclaimed Lord Montressor, stricken with a panic of anxiety.

"Gone! my lord! She is gone!"

"GONE!"

"Gone! Fled!"

"FLED!"

"Fled, my lord! Fled alone!"

"In the name of Heaven, my friend, what mean you?"

"Oh! sir! read and see!" exclaimed the old man, thrusting the two letters into the hands of his companion, and sinking into a chair, and wiping the drops of cold perspiration from his forehead.

Lord Montressor seized the billets, and naturally read the open one first. It was addressed to Mr. Oldfield, and was as follows:

"DEAR AND HONORED FRIEND:—Duty constrains me to depart. And though your heart so pleads for the temporal happiness of your 'child,' as almost now to drown the voice of conscience, yet on calm, dispassionate reflection, you will see that it is so. Farewell! Be Heaven as kind to you, as you have been to the poor ESTELLE."

With a heavy groan, Lord Montressor threw this note aside, and tore open and devoured the contents of the other, which was addressed to himself. It was written as coolly as she in her self-denial had ordained it to be:

"MY LORD:—Conscience compels me to withdraw from you. Only to avoid hindrance I go secretly An Act of Parliament will free you from the bond of our merely nominal marriage. Farewell, my Lord! May you be happy with a happier woman than the lost ESTELLE."

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"What does all this mean? When did she go? Where has she gone? *How* has she gone? What friends has she? What means? Answer, in the name of Heaven, sir, if you can!" exclaimed Lord Montressor, in extreme agitation.

"Ah, my lord, I do not know. I cannot tell. How should I? Except—yes! give me time!" cried the old man, wiping the beaded drops from his forehead, and struggling to regain composure.

"Well, sir? Well?" exclaimed Lord Montressor, impatiently.

"Yes! Well, when did she go, you ask? Stay! let me collect myself and think—yes, she certainly last night spoke of going," said the old man somewhat incoherently.

"Last night she spoke of going, and you did not warn me? Oh, Mr. Oldfield!" exclaimed his lordship, reproachfully.

"My lord, she only *spoke* of going, and invoked my assistance. I refused to aid her, and endeavored to persuade her from her purpose. Had I suspected she was about to depart, I should at once have summoned your lordship. But who could have foreseen that she would have left us in this sudden manner?"

'She spoke last night of going! Inform me, sir, if you please, and as nearly as you can recollect, *all* that passed last night upon that subject."

"I will endeavor to comply, my lord," said the clergyman, who then commenced and related the conversation that had taken place between himself and Lady Montressor in that parlor on the evening previous.

Lord Montressor groaned aloud.

"Sir, did she drop no hint as to *whither* she intended to go?"

"Not a word, not a breath, my lord!"

"Unhappy girl! Oh Estelle! Estelle! whom I would have gathered into my bosom, safe from all the storms of life! where are you now? Oh! Estelle, Estelle!" he

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groaned, burying his face in his hands. In another moment he started up.

"We waste time, Mr. Oldfield. Show me into her room. Perhaps there, some clue may be found to her flight."

With a deep sigh the aged minister nodded assent, and preceded his friend up the stairs, and into the deserted chamber lately occupied by Lady Montressor.

Lord Montressor, who had by this time recovered his presence of mind, calmly and collectedly went about the business of investigation.

"The bed has not been occupied; she did not therefore sleep here. But the couch is pressed; she must have laid down to rest. Let me see: here are the sperm candles, half burned down; she must have passed some hours of the night here. Her trunks are here; therefore she must have preferred to go out very quietly, and without calling assistance," he said, going about the room, and making his observations.

"Oh, my lord! ring the bell! summon the people of the inn, and question them," said the old clergyman, eagerly moving toward the bell-rope.

"Stay—do not ring yet; to examine these people should be our last resort; from appearances here, and from other circumstances, I doubt if they know any thing about her flight. And if they do not, I prefer not to enlighten them. Let us go down."

They left the room, locking the door, and withdrawing the key.

When they had reached the parlor, Lord Montressor said:

"Make no stir; create no excitement; leave the people of the inn to suppose, as they naturally will do, that Lady Montressor has left with your knowledge and consent. I will tell you how we may manage, without exciting their suspicion, to get information from them. Ring, and call for your bill up to this present hour, as if you were about

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to leave, which I suppose you will do in the course of the day. When the account is presented, note its *last items*. See if there is supper, a post-chaise, a messenger, or a porter, charged last night for Lady Montressor. If so, you can cavil at these items, and so, by disputing a little, get the whole facts, as far as they may be known here—whether she took supper, whether she procured a conveyance from the house, at what hour she went, and whither—and all without attracting particular attention."

"I see, I see," exclaimed the old man, pulling the bell-rope so vigorously that it was speedily answered by a waiter, who was directed to bring up Mr. Oldfield's account.

When, a few minutes after, the man reappeared, and presented the bill, Mr. Oldfield took it and glanced down its columns: supper for Lady Montressor was the last item.

"Hum-m—hum-m—hum-m" said the old gentleman, in the tone of one taking exception—"I think there is some mistake here; I think her ladyship did not take supper."

"Yes, please your reverence, I carried it up," replied the waiter.

"Hum-m—it must have been very late when you carried it up—as you say," said Mr. Oldfield, with the manner of a man who won't be imposed upon.

"Yes, please zir—at ten o'clock," replied the man.

"Hum-m. You have not charged the post-chaise, I see!"

"There wasn't no po'shay ordered, for no one here, please zir."

"Ah, yes, I—you are right—(the old man was about to say, "I *recollect*—you are right," but arrested himself before telling an untruth)—yes, you are right! Lady Montressor went away in a cab."

A few more adroitly put questions resulted in nothing satisfactory. The bill was paid, and the waiter, with a small donation, dismissed.

'She *must* have gone away in a cab, you know; so I

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told no untruth about *that*," said Mr. Oldfield, uneasy upon the subject of his little duplicity.

"These, then, are the facts as far as we know them—simply, that she took supper, rested awhile, wrote a letter, and, attended by her maid, left the house after ten o'clock. Now, the question is, *Whither* did she go?"

The old minister mournfully shook his head. He could make no suggestion.

"I think," continued Lord Montressor, notwithstanding his great anxiety, calmly reasoning out the matter, "judging from all you told me, that she meant to leave England; to do this she must have gone to Liverpool or to London. The night-train for London and Liverpool leaves at twelve o'clock. I think she went by that train. The grand junction is at Bristol. So far, I think, we have her. But at Bristol—did she take the London or the Liverpool route? Have you any knowledge to throw light upon this subject?"

The clergyman shook his head.

"Has she *friends* at either of these places?"

Again the old man shook his head, with a mournful wave of the hand, saying,

"*Once*, my lord, *many*. *Now*, I doubt, *any*."

"My God! what will become of her! so delicate, so fragile, so sorrowful, so inexperienced — alone, and unfriended in this bitter world! Oh! Estelle! my Estelle! But I must not think of these things! to do so will unfit me for action. Tell me, sir—has she means?"

The old man groaned—

"My lord, her father, when he sent her wardrobe, sent also a check for a thousand pounds. She placed the latter in my hands for our current expenses. I drew the money for it; but never could prevail on her to receive back a shilling of it. It remains untouched in my possession yet."

"Then she has no funds at all! My Estelle! Oh! what will become of you!"

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"Let me reflect—yes, she *has* funds; she has a small competency in her own right; five thousand pounds left her by her grandmother; it is in the hands of a banker in London."

"Then she has gone to London to draw it before leaving England. I may overtake and recover her yet! Oh! if I had known this precious fact three hours ago, I might then have gone after her by the noon train, and have been only twelve hours behind her. As it is, I must now wait for the midnight cars, and be a full day behind! Oh, Heaven! how difficult to govern one's impatience and be calm in a forced inaction under such circumstances! But patience. I shall see her soon: all will be well. What is the name of the banker who has her funds?" inquired his lordship, taking out his tablets.

"Scofield Brothers, Lombard street, London.

"Good-afternoon, sir. I am going to pack up for my journey," said Lord Montressor, rising, and returning the memorandum to his pocket.

"Good-day, my lord. I would myself accompany you on this journey, but that my parishioners are in sad want of their truant pastor, and my old wife is impatient to see me."

"I know it, I know it: it must be so—good-bye, sir. You have my everlasting gratitude for your kindness to Lady Montressor. Good-bye."

"Stay one moment, my dear lord! You know the tenor of her note. Suppose when you find her, she still refuses to return with you? Excuse my question, for the sake of anxiety."

"Should she still refuse—I should give her time, use reason, persuasion, prayer: should not these avail, I should then use *my power*. I should compel Estelle to return with me."

"My lord?"

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"Yes, I repeat it. She shall not sacrifice herself to fanaticism. I will constrain my love to come home and be at peace?"

Thus the two gentlemen parted: Mr. Oldfield to prepare for his return to his pastoral charge, Lord Montressor to make arrangements for his journey to London.

His lordship was at the depot in full time. The train started at twelve. Swiftly as he was carried forward, this seemed the longest ride and the longest night he had ever known. Some minutes less than two hours brought him to Bristol and the Grand Junction, where half an hour served for change of cars; and thus at half-past three o'clock, he found himself whirled along through night, and mist, and rain, on the route toward London. Soon the morning dawned and reddened in the east behind what seemed a bank of cloud; it was the mingled mist and fog that overhung the leviathan of cities.

The cars entered London from the West and reached the depot just as the sun arose. Lord Montressor took a hackney-coach and drove to a hotel in the immediate neighborhood of Lombard street. As it was now very early, some hours had yet to be lived through before he could hope to find the bankers at their place of business. He ordered an apartment, and got through the time as well as he could by making his morning toilet and attempting his morning-meal. Directly after breakfast, he entered a carriage and drove to the banking house of Scofield Brothers. He inquired for either of the owners, and was ushered into a back office where the junior partner sat writing at a desk.

"Good-morning, sir," said Lord Montressor, advancing —"You are——"

"John Scofield, at your service," answered the banker, rising.

"Lord Montressor."

"Happy to see you, my lord. Pray be seated"—handing

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a chair. "Hope we may be able to serve you this morning?"

"I thank you, sir."

Lord Montressor looked for an instant into the honest face of the banker, and then with the air of a man who states a fact known to himself, rather than one who asks information upon a subject, he said:

"Lady Montressor was with you yesterday?"

"Yes, my lord."

"And withdrew her deposits, of course?"

"She did, my lord."

Lord Montressor paused. How to frame his next inquiry as to the whereabouts of Estelle, without exciting the astonishment and conjecture of the man to whom he spoke, was now the difficulty. However, the question must be put. Lord Montressor was not one to shrink; besides, what indeed was the importance of Mr. John Scofield's surmises and speculations to Lord Montressor?

"Favor me with Lady Montressor's London address, if you please, sir," said his lordship, quietly.

It was not with surprise nor wonder, but with simple consternation, that the banker stood dumbfounded!

"Did you hear my question, Mr. Scofield?" asked Lord Montressor, after a pause.

"I beg pardon, my lord," said the banker, in a tone and manner in which astonishment was modified by respect; "but I am unable to furnish you with her ladyship's address. Lady Montressor has left England."

It was an overwhelming annunciation! Yet Lord Montressor neither started nor exclaimed; he was a man of too much firmness and self-control to do either, and perhaps also he had been too well prepared for it by what had preceded it; yet it was a stunning blow; he felt it so; he looked again and steadily, almost with rude scrutiny, into the face of John Scofield. Yes, he thought he could trust

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that face and confide in the rectitude and discretion of that man;—he knew also that the banker could not be really ignorant of the great trial lately concluded at the Exeter Assizes;—for the rest he must have faith in him.

"Will you favor me with a few moments of private conversation, Mr. Scofield?" he inquired in a low voice.

"Certainly, my lord," replied the banker, dismissing his clerk, and closing and locking the door behind him. "Now, my lord, I am at your service," he concluded, returning and resuming his seat.

"You are of course aware, Mr. Scofield, of the painful scenes through which Lady Montressor—and myself," (he added in that affectionate and generous spirit in which he ever wished to associate *himself* in all that was distressing and humiliating in her life,)—"have lately passed."

"I am aware, my lord," replied the banker, gravely and respectfully dropping his eyes.

"But you do not know, perhaps, that Lady Montressor and myself have not passed one single moment alone together since our marriage; or that notwithstanding the perfect legality of the ceremony that binds us together, Lady Montressor considers it her Christian duty to reserve herself from my protection; and in order to do so effectually, has withdrawn herself from my knowledge. Now, I would know whither she has gone, if you, without a breach of confidence, can inform me."

The banker who had listened in respectful sympathy to the words of Lord Montressor, now paused and reflected before answering—

"My lord, as Lady Montressor, of course, made no confidential communications to us, I do not know that any reason exists why I should not give you all the information upon this subject in my power."

"I will thank you then, sir, to proceed."

"The manner in which I learned that Lady Montressor

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was about to leave England was merely incidental, as my knowledge of her destination, is, I may say, barely inferential."

"Proceed, sir, proceed."

"Her ladyship came, early yesterday morning—much about this time, in fact,—to withdraw the funds she had in our hands. She required a portion of them in cash and the remainder in drafts upon some American house."

"Then she has gone to America!" interrupted Lord Montressor, recollecting at that trying moment the fervent admiration with which poor Estelle had often spoken of the young Western Republic.

"Undoubtedly, my lord."

"Go on, sir! pray, go on—when did she sail? Her voyage must have been very sudden! She must have chanced upon a ship about to leave port."

"I think that quite likely, my lord. When she was about to leave us, she required that the money and drafts should be sent down to her at the Nelson's Head before eleven o'clock, as she should leave the hotel at that hour. We had correspondents in New York and in Baltimore. I inquired of her ladyship upon which of these the drafts in her favor should be drawn, and she said—upon the Baltimore house. The money was sent in due season. Our clerk, who was intrusted with its delivery, saw Lady Montressor leave the hotel at eleven o'clock. And we know that the Princess, Captain Caton, sailed from this port at twelve, bound for Baltimore."

"Then we are to infer that she went to Baltimore, though the fact wants confirmation. One piece of information more, sir,—the name of your Baltimore correspondents?"

"Sommerville and Son, Pratt street."

"Do you happen to know, sir, when the next vessel sails for the United States?"

"I do not, sir"

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"Then I thank you for the assistance you have already given me. Good-morning, sir."

"Good-morning, my lord. If we can be so happy as to serve your lordship in any capacity, pray consider us always at your orders."

"I thank you, sir. Good-day."

And thus the peer and the banker parted.

"Good Heaven! how very matured her plans must have been, and with what dispatch she must have carried them out!" thought Lord Montressor, as he left the banking-house of Scofield Brothers, re-entered his cab, and drove to St. Catherine's Dock, to inquire for vessels bound for the United States. After a diligent search of several hours he found that there was no ship to sail for Baltimore in less than two weeks. The first that was expected to leave for that port was the Mercury, that would sail on or after the fifteenth of June.

Much disappointed, he returned to his hotel, called for writing materials, dashed off a hasty letter to Mr. Oldfield, detailing all that had happened, mailed it, called a cab, and drove rapidly to the Liverpool depot, which he reached just a few minutes before the cars left.

His errand to Liverpool was to learn whether within less than two weeks any vessel would leave that port for Baltimore. He discovered that there was one to sail in six days for Boston, one in a week to Halifax, and one in ten days for New Orleans. But as neither of these promised a quicker termination to his proposed voyage, or a speedier meeting with Estelle than did the chances of the Mercury, he turned from Liverpool in disappointment.

He took the night train to Bristol, where he was more fortunate in finding a vessel—the "Queen Charlotte"—that would sail for Baltimore on or after the tenth of June. Upon further inquiry at other ports, he found no more

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satisfactory prospect, and therefore he bespoke a passage on the Queen Charlotte.

He then went down to his seat in Dorsetshire, and employed the intervening time in making judicious arrangements for that voyage, which, could he have found a vessel about immediately to sail for the United States, he would certainly without any preparation have undertaken.

Withal, however, it was a weary, weary decade of days that passed before the tenth of June arrived, and Lord Montressor found himself on board the good ship Queen Charlotte.

CHAPTER IX.

SHIPWRECK.

"Ah! many a dream was in that ship
An hour before her death;
And thoughts of home with sigh's disturbed
The sleeper's long-drawn breath.
* * * * * * *
A hundred souls in one instant of dread
Are hurried over the deck;
And fast the miserable ship
Becomes a lifeless wreck.
Her keel hath struck a hidden rock,
Her planks are torn asunder,
And down comes her mast with a reeling shock,
And a hideous crash like thunder
Her sails are draggled in the brine,
That gladdened late the skies,
And her pennant that kissed the fair moonshine,
Down many a fathom lies."—*Wilson.*

It was a glorious summer morning, when the splendor of the sky, the sparkling brightness of the water, the animating bustle on the docks, and in the boats—all conspired to raise and cheer the spirits of the spectator.

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At ten o'clock Lord Montressor entered the long-boat that was to convey him to the Queen Charlotte, where he found the captain, mate and men all engaged in the hearty work of preparation for getting under way A fair wind had sprung up, and they were but waiting for the ebb tide. They had not to wait long. At twelve precisely the tide began to ebb. The captain came upon deck, seized his speaking-trumpet, and called out,

"All hands! Up anchor!"

In an instant every man was upon deck.

"Each officer to post! Man the capstan! Stand by to let fall the tops'ils. Heave round the capstan! Heave roundly!"

"Ay, ay, sir! Anchor's apeak!"

"Heave! Heave my hearties! Heave and trip the anchor!"

The men laid themselves to the bars, turned vigorously, and then stopped to breathe.

"A-trip it is, sir!" cried the mate.

The moment the anchor was a-weigh the ship began to cast to larboard.

The captain shouted through his speaking-trumpet—

"Hoist the jib and the fore-to'mas' stays'ils! Helm-a-starboard! So—steady—steady."

"Ay, ay, sir! Steady it is!" responded the helmsman.

The crew worked heartily, the brave ship righted herself, the sails filled with the breeze, and the Queen Charlotte, stood gallantly out to the Channel. A shout from the shore cheered her on.

But she was not a fast sailer, this honest old Queen Charlotte, any more than her royal namesake was a "fast woman." She was, on the contrary, "slow and sure," like her good old majesty, the defunct queen. She was, in fact, an old-fashioned, short and square-bowed brig, one of the last of

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ner generation, and very unlike in build and behavior to the long and narrow-decked, high-masted and rakish Baltimore clippers that were then in such high favor. In something more than due time, then, the Queen Charlotte left Lundy Island to leeward, got out of the Channel and into the broad Atlantic.

The fair wind continued for several days, and yet the brig made but moderate progress. How she would possibly get on against a head-wind remained to be seen.

The season seemed to promise a continuance of fine weather, and consequently a pleasant voyage, for the violent spring gales were over, and the latter summer storms were not soon to be expected.

Yet they had not been at sea more than two weeks before the weather changed, the sky became dark and gloomy, the wind sprang up, the waves arose, and for several days the ship beat about in a high sea, against a head wind, making no progress, scarcely able to hold her own. Day after day showed the same scene—morning after morning the murky sky, heavy with clouds, lowered down upon a turbulent sea, broken into high and coursing waves, whose crests were tipped with frost, like foam upon the lips of racers—night after night the impenetrable darkness above, around, beneath, and relieved only by the phosphoric glimmer and sparkle of the crested waves. A frisky clipper might have been lost in this gale, but the staid old Queen Charlotte "stood the storm" for a week.

And then there came another change of weather, bringing a clear sky, gentle breeze, and a calm sea, which continued with little variation for two or three weeks, during which the brig made moderate headway.

Ill could Lord Montressor brook this sort of "making haste slowly." Often he reproached himself for taking passage in the Charlotte, instead of waiting ten days longer to embark in the Mercury. And this regret was in no degree

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lessened by an event that occurred when they were nearing the Azores.

It was a very fine day in August, with a fair, brisk wind, and the Queen Charlotte, being in most unaccountably gay spirits, had crowded on all her canvas, even to the studding sails and royals, and was doing her best at running before the wind—as if her long defunct majesty had ever in her court array forgotten her royal dignity and tried to run! While thus going under full sail the brig was hailed by a vessel bearing down full upon her.

"Ship—ahoy-oy!" came reverberating over the water from the speaking-trumpet of the purser.

"Halloo!" responded the Queen Charlotte.

"Who are you? where do you hail from? where are you bound?"

"The Queen Charlotte, Brownloe master, from Bristol to Baltimore! Who are you?"

"The Mercury, Captain Brande, from London to Baltimore."

Almost as she spoke she bore rapidly down upon the brig, came alongside, and without stopping, cheered and passed!

But among the passengers that crowded the upper deck, Lord Montressor had recognized a man, whose appearance there sent all the blood from his heart to his brain!

This man was Victoire L'Orient.

How came he there? What was his object?

He also was going to America—to Baltimore! Why? What should carry him thither? Was he going in pursuit of Estelle? Had he, perhaps, managed to keep up a system of espionage around her? Had he discovered her flight to America—to Baltimore? and would he pursue her thither and persecute her there?

Before these questions had fairly formed themselves in the mind of Lord Montressor, the Mercury, with her

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crew and passengers, had cheered again, and passed far ahead.

The Queen Charlotte, comparatively "slow and sure," even when under full sail and before a fresh wind, and unflurried either by the example of the Mercury or the impatience of her own passengers and crew, kept on the even tenor of her way.

All that afternoon and that night she sailed before a fair wind, and at sunrise the next morning entered the port of Fayal.

There again she spoke the Mercury, that was just passing out of the harbor.

And yet *once more* the Queen Charlotte saw the Mercury. Alas! but we anticipate.

The brig remained in the port of Fayal two days to discharge a portion of her cargo and to take in freight, as well as to obtain a supply of fresh provisions and water, and then again set sail.

The weather continued fine, with little variation in the clear sky, fresh wind and gentle sea for several days, during which the brig made fair progress toward the Chesapeake.

It was the morning of the twentieth of August that the man on the look-out cried:

"Land ho!" and the distant points of Cape Charles and Cape Henry hove in sight. And an hour after noon the Queen Charlotte entered the Bay.

That night the wind suddenly fell. And the next day—a day ever to be remembered on that coast—the brig lay becalmed under a burning sky, and upon a motionless sea.

And now my mind shrinks from describing the events that made hideous that afternoon and night; shrinks both because of the deep horror one feels in reflecting upon those awful scenes of storm and devastation, when sky and ocean meet in deadly conflict, and fire, air and water—all the

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elements of organized nature seem resolving back into original "chaos and old night."

This day—the twenty-first of August, when the Queen Charlotte lay becalmned in the Chesapeake—had, as I said, been still and hot, with an oppressive, suffocating atmosphere. Though there was not a cloud in the sky, a ripple on the water, nor a breath of wind from any quarter, yet the experienced old seamen seemed grave and thoughtful, and looked to the rigging of their ship. And the captain paced the deck, casting an eye—now to the sky, now to the sea, and now to the rigging.

"What can be the matter with the skipper?" asked one inexperienced passenger of another.

"He's on the look-out for squalls," answered the other, carelessly, not believing what they said.

Abaft, two Baltimore youths, homeward bound, were leaning over the taffrail, looking despondently into the motionless water.

"Was ever such a sea and such a sky as this? Not a ripple, not a breath, and as hot as Hades! Heaven send that the wind would rise!" complained one.

"Yes! it is a right down deuced bore to lay becalmed here, for days, perhaps, almost in gunshot of port," grumbled the other.

"Now, d'ye see them two d——d land lubbers with their elbows on the taffrail?" observed one bronzed and grizzled old "salt" to his shipmate. "They want to hurry the wind up! Avast there, my fine fellows! don't you be impatient! The wind will come out from the west, and speak to you presently!"

As noon approached an ominous change crept over the face of the heavens and the waters.

Not a cloud was to be seen, yet the whole heavens visibly darkened, assuming a dull, hazy, coppery hue.

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Not a billow ruffled the surface of the waters, yet the whole vast sea perceptibly swelled.

Not a breath of wind stirred, yet at intervals a low voice wailed across the waters as if nature mourned the coming destruction.

The captain still walked the deck, telescope in hand, making observations, and occasionally giving orders.

"What do you think of the weather, captain? Is there a storm brewing?" asked Lord Montressor, joining him.

The skipper lowered his glass, and turning upon the questioner a sly look that might have been read—Do you really think I am going to tell you now?—replied:

"By the soul of Nelson! I cannot at this moment inform you, my lord. It may be only a fresh wind that will take us large into port; and then again it may be the confoundest hurricane that has ever been seen on this coast!—Avast there! Mate, see that the lightning conductors are rigged out!" he said, suddenly breaking off to give the order.

"Ay, ay, sir," replied that officer, touching his hat, and going below to obey the command.

"At least," said Lord Montressor, resuming the conversation, "you have sufficient time to take every necessary precaution for the safety of the vessel."

"Humph—humph—why certainly it is not exactly upon us yet, whatever it is! and I and the 'Charlotte' have weathered a storm before to-day. Why, sir! I could tell you of a time, when we doubled Cape Horn——," said the skipper, launching into a tale of a tempest that was presently interrupted—the tale—not the tempest—by the re-appearance of the mate on deck, to report the lightning conductors rigged out.

"As you said, my lord, there is time to make ready for what may be coming, thank heaven! This may be only a fresh wind that will carry us gallantly into port; therefore

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I shall not take in sail just yet; though it is best to be ready at short notice to do so. Mate!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Call all hands on deck!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Let them stand by to take in the royals and to'gallant stun's'ils."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

As the meridian passed, the sun took on a dark blood-like color, and the awful stillness of the elements seemed more foreboding.

Slowly—slowly the Spirit of the Storm advanced and took shape.

A black cloud, seemingly no larger than an eagle with spread wings, appeared on the Western horizon, directly under the sun. The wind awoke with a sigh, and breathed across the waters, curling the surface into little ripples, and moving the sails of the brig, and then died away.

"In royals!" shouted the captain.

The order was executed.

The cloud climbed faster, higher, increasing in size and darkness. Again the wind arose and moaned across the waters, rolling the waves against the tide and fluttering the sails of the ship, and then died away as before.

"Take in the to'gallant stu'n-s'ils! And you at the wheel, mind your helm!" thundered the captain.

The cloud had nearly reached the zenith. Once more the wind sprung up, and roared across the now angry waters, driving the sea into high waves, and filling all the sails of the brig that now bounded before the blast.

"Clew down the topsails; haul up the courses! Hard down!" shouted the captain.

The storm came on apace, the whole sky was overcast and darkened. The wind lashed the sea into fury and drove the brig rocking and reeling forward, on her course.

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The passengers swarmed upon the deck, and crowded around the skipper.

"Captain, captain, is there any danger?" asked one.

"Captain, captain!" exclaimed several others, as the skipper, regardless of their interruptions, hurried about giving his orders. "Captain, captain!——"

"For heaven's sake, gentlemen, go below! You are in my way! You hinder me in the working of the ship! You risk your own lives as well as the safety of the vessel," said the skipper, impatiently, hastening away.

"But—for the Lord's sake, what are you going to do?" asked the first speaker, laying hold of the captain's coat-skirt to detain him.

"We are trying to get into Hampton Roads: there we shall be safe. Once more, for heaven's sake, gentlemen, be advised, and go below!" exclaimed the captain, breaking away.

A vivid flash of lightning, kindling into blue flame every scrap of metal about the ship, accompanied by an awful peal of thunder, and followed by a sudden deluge of rain, so enforced the order, that most of the passengers were glad to make a hasty retreat.

The storm hurried onward; the whole heavens lowered down upon the sea, and all was black as the blackest midnight, save when a dazzling flash of lightning kindled the whole scene into a momentary conflagration; showing the whole tremendous sea, rising and falling in mountains and valleys, and clouds and waves mingling together in wildest chaos, so that, which was the heavens, and which was the earth, it was almost impossible to know. And through all this horrible confusion, the brave ship—heaving, plunging, reeling,—struggled; now lifted upon the top of some mountain wave, high among the clouds; then pitched headlong down into the dreadful yawning, chasm of the sea.

The captain never for an instant left the deck. His

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presence there enheartened the crew, who worked gallantly. But their almost superhuman efforts failed to get the ship into Hampton Roads. She was driven furiously past their entrance. Through all that awful night the captain never left his post. At intervals some passenger, more venturous than the others, would make the desperate attempt to come upon deck; but even if he were not, by the heaving of the ship, hurled headlong down the companion-ladder, he was soon glad to retreat. The storm raged on with unabating violence. The captain never lost his presence of mind, nor the crew their courage. The former gave his orders, decisively, clearly, emphatically—the latter obeyed with alacrity. Every sail had been in succession taken in, and the ship was now driving along under bare poles. As she had done, many times before, the good ship weathered the storm. Yet was the night not unmarked by disaster to her brave crew; a heavy sea, taking her amidships, swept off three of her gallant seamen; but in the dense darkness, or blinding glare, amid the deafening noise of the tempest, this loss was not known—it was not discovered until morning.

It was long after midnight, when the fury of the storm had in some degree abated; the ship was scudding along before the wind, and the captain and the mate, exhausted by their late tremendous labors, were resting on the deck, when the distant report of a single cannon came booming over the waters.

"A ship in distress; but, great heaven! what earthly power can aid her in such a night as this?" said the captain.

The mate made no reply, but listened anxiously for a repetition of the signal.

In about three minutes, the firing was repeated.

"The Lord help her," said the mate reverently—"what can be done for her, truly! We are making rapidly toward her if it were broad day, we might help her. Or if she

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could exist till day, we might save the crew. What think you, captain?"

"Good Heaven, that depends upon circumstances. If in beating about in this storm, she has sprung a leak, she must go down in a few minutes."

"But if she has been cast upon a sand-bank, or driven ashore?"

"Even then it is doubtful whether we could aid her. If she has been cast upon Smith's Sand-bar, as I fear is the case, we could not approach her without sharing her fate."

"But the boats?"

"Would not reach her in this sea."

"But the gale may go down before she breaks up," suggested the pitying and hopeful mate.

"Well, Heaven grant it; for if it should turn out so, we may be of assistance," replied the captain.

Every five minutes the signal gun was fired. The captain, mate and crew, listened in impotent sympathy, or spoke together in hushed and solemn voices; for well they knew that, but for the blessing of Providence upon their almost superhuman exertions, this case of shipwreck might have been their own.

Meanwhile the Queen Charlotte flew before the wind. At every firing of the signal gun, she seemed nearer the sound.

"We are approaching that other ship! We must look out, and not run afoul of her," said the captain, leaving his position, and going forward to give orders.

Once again the signal gun was fired, and then it was heard no more. When ten or fifteen minutes had elapsed, and the listening crew found no repetition of the sound—

"God help her," said the captain, "she is lost!"

The crew echoed his groan.

Day dawned, and the sun arose over a wild, wild scene. Black and ragged clouds, the fragments of the broken storm,

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drove across the sky. The wind was still very strong, and the waves ran very high.

The Queen Charlotte scudded along under a close-reefed main topsail and reefed foresail. She kept a sharp look out for some sign of the fate of the ship she had heard firing the signal guns in the night. The mate took his post forward, and with telescope in hand, scanned the expanse of sea ahead. And thus it was scarcely a quarter of an hour after sunrise, that that officer suddenly dropped his glass and called out:

"A wreck on the sand-bank ahead!"

The captain hurried forward, seized the glass from the hand of the mate, leveled it and took sight.

"By my life, it is the poor Mercury! and if we do not look sharp we shall run foul of her! Mind what you are about there at the wheel. Hard up. Hard up—so! Steady—steady!" cried the captain.

The ship answered her helm, and presently came in sight of the wreck.

It was a terrible spectacle.

There before them lay the sand-bank and the broken ship!

The ill-fated Mercury had been pitched headforemost with such tremendous force upon the bank, that her prow was buried deep in the sands, and her stern lifted, revealing one-third of the length of her keel. Her masts had been snapped short off, and with all their sails and shrouds had fallen forward upon the sand. And there she lay stranded, broken, helpless—exposed to every assault of wind and wave! At intervals a heavy sea broke over her. A nearer approach showed some half-dozen haggard wretches, the remnant of her unfortunate crew, assembled aft, holding on for dear life to the taffrail, yet scarcely able to keep their hold, with their hair and garments streaming in the wind They were seen to wave signals of entreaty to the advancing ship

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But a horrible sea raged between the brig and the sand-bank! To have approached much nearer the wreck, would have been inevitably to share its fate! To have put out a boat would have been madness!—no boat could have lived a moment in such a sea.

Yet the Queen Charlotte could not, would not, pass her by. The only thing to do then, was to wear and heave to, to watch and seize an opportunity of rendering aid, if perchance the winds and waves should subside in time to send out boats to her.

But it was a terrible thing to lay there inactive, and behold sea after sea advance and break over that bound and disabled vessel!—at every advance shaking her hull almost in pieces—at every retreat carrying off some portion of her rigging or cargo. And it was more terrible still to behold those half-dozen fellow-creatures, clinging in desperation to their frail support!

At last a huge wave arose and rearing itself, like a moving cliff crested with foam, advanced upon the doomed wreck!

At this appalling sight, all on board the brig held their breath for very awe.

The mountain wave reached and broke over the sand-bank. And the ship was swamped!

A simultaneous cry of horror arose from the brig!

The next moment fragments of the shattered ship strewed the sea, and from amid the boiling hell of waters arose three struggling wretches.

One held on to a broken spar that kept him afloat.

Two others, for a single instant, strove for the possession of a plank that both had seized, but which was not sufficient to sustain more than one; then the stronger of the two, whom Lord Montressor thought he recognized as Victoire L'Orient, freeing his hand, struck off the weaker, who immediately sank, but in the impetuosity of this cruel blow he

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also lost his own hold upon the plank, and disappeared in the whirlpool of waters.

The third man—the sole survivor of the wreck, clinging desperately to the fragment of broken spar, and each moment growing more incapable of retaining his hold, was dashed hither and thither, at the mercy of the waves.

Lord Montressor, who had been standing, leaning over the bulwarks, chafing with impatience at his own inactivity, could now endure this sight no longer. It was not in his brave and generous nature thus to stand and behold a fellow-creature helpless amid such deadly peril, and not wish to risk life if needful for his rescue. Lord Montressor was a man of athletic and powerful frame, as well as of heroic spirit. He had been trained in all those gymnastic exercises calculated to develope extraordinary muscular strength and skill. Calling upon a seaman to assist him, he hastily stripped off his upper garments, fastened a strong rope securely around his waist, and, against the vehement expostulations of all who were near him, threw himself into the raging sea.

The captain, crew and passengers watched him in intense anxiety.

Buffeting the billows, he made toward the struggling wretch. Wind and tide were in his favor, though three times was he violently thrown back. Yet would he not give the signal to be drawn in. He seemed resolved to save the shipwrecked man or share his fate. At length it was due as much to an apparent accident, as to his own strength and skill, that he was enabled to effect his purpose —a friendly wave lifting him upon its breast, cast him forward in reach of the spar; simultaneously he threw his arms out and seized the man; it was time! the strength of the poor wretch was exhausted,—he was about to drop off! Wave after wave dashed over them, as if the sea had resolved to sever them, but Lord Montressor held on bravely

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to his prize. He gave the signal; the men on board the brig began to haul in the rope, and in a few moments more the shipwrecked man and his gallant preserver were safe upon the deck of the Queen Charlotte!

Lord Montressor left his charge in the hands of the sailors, and to escape the congratulations of his companions, as well as to change his wet clothes, he went below.

Amid all the horror with which he reflected upon the scenes of the shipwreck, one question forced itself upon his mind. Victoire L'Orient had been a passenger on board the ill-fated Mercury—was he lost or saved?—was he the man who had been seen to strike his fellow from the floating plank and perish in the cruel act? had he, in fact, been among the number of the passengers who had been swept off from the stern gallery? Or had he, perhaps, previously taken passage in some boat, that might, at some earlier hour of the disaster, have left the wreck in the desperate hope of reaching the shore? and had he perchance so reached the shore?—in a word, was he lost or saved? This question, as it was inevitable it should—pressed anxiously upon his mind.

And yet, reader, had Lord Montressor believed the man whom he saved to be Victoire L'Orient, he would just as certainly have risked his life for his preservation.

Meanwhile, the beaten and battered victim of the wreck was taken into the captain's cabin, supplied with dry clothing, refreshed with bread and wine, and forced to lie down upon a berth to recover his exhausted strength. The captain, who like all old sailors, was a tolerably good physician, would not permit his guest to be questioned until he had had some rest.

"And, indeed," said the old skipper, "he is Lord Montressor's own prize, and shall be examined first of all by his lordship!"

And in truth the stranger seemed to be of a similar

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opinion; for after he had been refreshed by a short rest, his first request was that he might be able to see and thank his brave preserver.

Word to this effect was transmitted to Lord Montressor, who lost no time in obeying the summons. He entered the cabin, and took his seat by the side of the berth upon which the shipwrecked passenger lay.

The stranger seemed to be a man of about twenty-two years of age, of symmetrical form and handsome face, having a Grecian profile; fair, clear complexion; golden-brown hair, and dark, hazel eyes.

"I am glad to find you so well recovered, my friend," said Lord Montressor, looking with kind interest upon his rescued waif.

"I thank you, my lord—I beg pardon! but I understood my gallant preserver to be the Viscount Montressor," said the young man, fixing his dark, expressive eyes with a look of inquiry upon the face of his lordship.

"That is my name, sir."

"And mine is Julius Levering. I am a Baltimore man, my Lord, and am not unacquainted with the fame of Lord Montressor," said the youth.

Lord Montressor gravely waived this compliment, and said—

"I hope that you have suffered no injury from the floating fragments of the wreck, sir?"

"I thank you; none, my lord," said Julius Levering, passing his hand thoughtfully across his brow; then withdrawing it, he added, "In truth, I know not *how*, in adequate terms, to express my eternal gratitude to your lordship for the preservation of my life."

"Thank Providence, my dear sir, and not me. My act was too instinctive to merit recollection," returned Lord Montressor.

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"But, my dear lord, you risked your own valuable life to save that of a stranger!"

"As I should have also risked it to save an enemy. The act was merely impulsive—inevitable, I may say! Pray let us drop that part of the subject. Now tell me, if you please, were there any other persons saved from the wreck, do you know?"

"Great heaven! I do not, sir! We struck the sand-bank just after midnight. At daybreak, fourteen of our number left the ship in an open boat, that seemed to have no chance of living in such a sea; they embarked in the frantic expectation of being able to reach the Maryland shore. Whether the boat ever made the land, or whether, as is most likely, she went down amid the waves, I have no means of knowing! I only know, that except myself, those who preferred to remain and take their chances with the ship, fared no better than she did, whatever her fate may have been. Before that last great sea took us—and even before your ship hove in sight of us—we had lost several of our companions, blown off or washed off from their frail hold. Among those who were swept off right before my eyes, was a poor old fragile French woman—one Madame L'Orient. Good heaven! shall I ever get rid of that vision!"

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CHAPTER X.

RECOGNITION OF THE DEAD BODY.

'And Lara sleeps not where his fathers sleep,
But where he died his grave is quite as deep!
Nor is his mortal slumber less profound,
That earth nor formed, nor marble decked the mound.— *Byron.*

DEEPLY shocked as he was, Lord Montressor bent earnestly forward to listen for something further.

But Mr. Levering, apparently overcome with the thought of the scenes through which he had just passed, covered his face with his hands, and continued silent.

The doubt that troubled Lord Montressor remained unsolved. For all that he could gather from Mr. Levering's conversation, Victoire L'Orient might have been lost in the ship, or saved in the boat—supposing that the latter had lived to reach the shore. That his mother had preferred to stay in the ship, where she finally perished, was no sure sign that Victoire had not deserted her there, as he surely might have done had she persisted in remaining while he chose to depart.

Finally, unwilling to disturb Mr. Levering with questions upon this painful subject, conscious also, perhaps, of feeling too deep an interest in the fate of Monsieur L'Orient, Lord Montressor bade his new acquaintance good-day, and, leaving him to repose, went up on deck.

The storm had spent its fury. The wind and waves, as if they had accomplished the object for which they arose, had now subsided.

The scene on deck was a stirring one. The captain, mate and crew were all busily engaged. One party, under

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the direction of the captain, were preparing to get under sail. Another set, at the orders of the mate, were letting down the boats.

The captain stood forward, leveling his glass at the sand bank that, strewn with sea-weed, shells and fragments of the wreck, now loomed largely from the retiring waves.

Lord Montressor came up to the side of the skipper, who immediately lowered his glass and said—

"We are making ready to get under sail, my lord! But first I shall send the boats to the sand bank to bring off that body, which has been cast ashore there, and give it Christian burial, at least, if it be only in the depths of the sea! By the general appearance, I think it is the body of that man that beat the other one off the plank and drowned himself in the act. There! you can see for yourself, my lord." And the captain placed the glass in the hands of his passenger.

Lord Montressor raised the instrument and took sight at the sand bank.

Yes! there, thrown up by the waves, partially buried in the sand, and slightly covered with sea-weed, lay the dead body of a man! Various fragments of the wrecked ship, and remnants of its cargo—spars, yards, planks, barrels, casks and strong boxes, more or less broken and staved open, were scattered about. From these various objects Lord Montressor turned his glass once more upon the dead body. It certainly did bear some resemblance to the man who had struck his companion from the plank, and perished in the deed; but beyond this Lord Montressor could not form any conclusive opinion in regard to it. With a sigh he dropt the telescope.

Two boats were now lowered, manned, and pushed off from the brig.

Lord Montressor watched their course with his naked eye until they reached the scene of the wreck; then he

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once more raised the telescope to scan more closely their operations on the sand bar.

The men in the small boat landed first, and reverently raised the corpse and carried it on board their boat, where they covered it with a sail cloth; then they returned to the sands and joined the men from the large boat, who went about among the waifs of the wreck, selecting such casks, barrels and boxes as had received the least injury, and were the most worthy of preservation. When this was done and the second boat was laden, the men embarked again and rowed back to the Queen Charlotte.

The large boat with the rescued relics of the wreck reached the brig first, and was unladen before the small boat, propelled slowly with measured strokes, in honor of the dead she bore, arrived.

She pulled up to the starboard gangway, where the captain, mate, and many of the passengers were assembled to receive her.

The corpse, still wrapped in the sail-cloth, was reverently lifted out, hoisted up, and laid upon the deck.

The face and breast were uncovered, and exposed to inspection.

"Is there any one present who is able to identify this body?" inquired the captain, possibly as a mere matter of form, for it was not probable that any other than the shipwrecked passenger, then resting in the cabin, could be competent to do so.

Many, however, crowded around to examine the features of the corpse. It seemed that of a man of about thirty years of age, of tall, slight figure, brown complexion, black hair, eyebrows, and mustachios, and features that seemed to have originally been regular and handsome, as far as their present distorted and stiffened condition allowed the spectator to judge.

Lord Montressor stood among the lookers-on, and, with

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folded arms and serious brow, gazed upon the face of the dead. And well he might! It was the cause of all his woe—it was the mortal foe of Estelle—it was, in a word, Victoire L'Orient that lay dead before him!

No one spoke.

"Well?" asked the captain, looking around upon the earnest faces bent over the body.

"I can identify this corpse, Captain Brande," said the solemn voice of Lord Montressor.

All eyes were now turned upon his lordship.

"Well, my lord?" said the captain.

"This is the body of a Frenchman, by name Victoire L'Orient, a native of Paris, and a late passenger on board the Mercury. It would be well, also, to have this identity further proved by Mr. Levering, the rescued passenger below."

And Lord Montressor, having delivered these words, bowed gravely and withdrew from the scene.

The corpse was again wrapped in the canvas and carried aft to the stern gallery, where it was laid and covered over, while preparations were made for the burial.

Julius Levering, after an hour's repose, dressed himself in a suit of clothes supplied to him by Lord Montressor's valet, and came up on deck to look about; hearing that a dead body had been picked up and recognized as that of Victoire L'Orient, he inquired where it lay; and being informed, he went aft to the stern gallery to behold it. Arrived upon the spot, he stooped, raised the covering, and gazed upon the face of the dead.

He had a heavy stake in the fate of this man, beside whose corse he stood wrapped in the closest thought. He started like a detected criminal in hearing a voice speak at his side:

"I beg your parding, Capting, but do you also know

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this corpse ?" said a man in livery, touching his hat as he joined him.

"Yes, my friend, this is the body of Monsieur Victoire L'Orient, my late fellow-passenger," replied Mr. Levering, recovering his self-possession.

"Beg your parding again, Capting, but are you certain, now, as this is really and truly the body of Mounseer Wictwor ?" repeated the new-comer, incredulously.

"Of course I am, friend," replied Mr. Levering, gravely

"Can't possibly be *any body else* by mistake can it ?"

"Assuredly not."

"Then he is Mounseer Wictwor to a *dead certainty* ?"

"To a dead certainty, yes," answered Mr. Levering, wondering at the strange manner of the intruder.

"And was he *drownded* sure enough ?"

"Certainly, he was."

"And are you sure he is *quite* dead ?"

"Can you not see for yourself ?" asked Mr. Levering, beginning to believe his new acquaintance to be a lunatic.

"Yes, he looks so, sartain; but then you never can depend on these wenemous reptyles. They're so uncommon deceiving."

"Deceiving ?"

"Yes; you never can be sure on 'em unless you bile 'em !"

"I don't understand you."

"I mean they're so werry apt to come round again—do you think *he'll* come round ?"

"What ?"

"Do you think he'll not *come to life* presently ?"

"Does he look like it ?" inquired Mr. Levering, now firmly convinced that his interlocutor was a madman.

"No, he don't ! but as I said afore you can't place any confidence in sich !"

"Why, what do you mean ?"

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"Nothing! only this here Mounseer was shipwracked *once afore* and drownded—*dead*. And two years arfter, when everybody had forgotten him, lo! and behold! he comes to life and turns up most onconveniently, in the wrong time and place, as sprightly as a sarpint in spring! and gives no end to the trouble to those in high places!"

"Pray, friend, who are *you?*" inquired Mr. Levering of the supposed maniac.

"One of his lordship, Lord Montressor's grooms."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Levering, with the air of a man upon whom a sudden light had broken.

The men coming aft to prepare the dead body for burial, interrupted the conversation. The new acquaintances both left the stern gallery. The groom went down to the gun-deck to gossip with the sailors. And Mr. Levering proceeded to inspect the waifs of the wreck that had been brought on board. He seemed very much relieved to find among them a strong box which he immediately claimed and proved to be his own.

At noon that day the solemn ceremony of a "Burial at Sea" was performed. The crew were all piped on deck, and amid a reverential silence, the captain read the impressive funeral service of the Episcopal Church. And at its conclusion the body was solemnly committed to the deep.

And immediately afterward the Queen Charlotte once more set sail. And from this hour an uninterrupted season of fine weather, with a fresh wind, favored her until the fifth day, a beautiful Sabbath near the last of August, when at sunrise the Queen Charlotte, with all her flags flying, anchored in Baltimore harbor.

The same morning Lord Montressor bade adieu to his late companion, and left the ship for his hotel.

If any circumstance would have augmented his intense desire to meet Estelle, it must have been his possession of the important information he had now to communicate to

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her. He considered the events of the recovery of the drowned body by the crew of the Queen Charlotte, and his own presence on the spot to identify the corpse as that of Victoire L'Orient, as providential. He felt assured that certainty in regard to the fate of this man must at least give peace to the tempest-tost life of Estelle. He hoped also that it would change her purposes and settle her future. And now that he had reached port, his anxiety to find her was almost insupportable. But the Sabbath must be lived through; nay, indeed notwithstanding his weak human impatience, it must be duly honored! He compelled himself to be quiet, and went to the Episcopal church twice that day—attending St. George's in the forenoon, and St. John's in the afternoon, in the faint vain hope also that at one or the other he might possibly see Estelle, whom he knew to be a scrupulous and regular attendant upon Divine Service.

And then, after a night of sleepless anxiety, he arose early on Monday morning, and as soon as there was any possibility of finding the bankers at their place of business, he took a carriage and drove it to the banking-house of Somerville and Son. He found the senior partner already at his desk. He introduced himself, and made inquiries relative to the lady of whom he came in search.

Alas! Alas!

At first Mr. Somerville, senior, knew nothing about such a lady—had never seen or heard of her, and was certain, begging his lordship's pardon, that she had never honored their establishment with a call. But at this point of the conversation, Mr. Somerville, junior, who had been standing at another desk, listening with his pen behind his ear, came forward and recalled to his father's mind the beautiful English lady, dressed in deep mourning, who had come from the house of Scofield Brothers, London, and had called upon them just two weeks ago.

Then—yes! oh, yes! the old banker did not remember

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the lovely lady in mourning, but he remembered the heavy drafts drawn by Scofield Brothers on them, in favor of ——— now, who *was* it in favor of? He referred to his papers and found—

"Estelle Montressor."

"Yes, that was the lady."

Well! the lady had received her money and had departed. And that was all they knew of her. And from them Lord Montressor received no other satisfaction.

CHAPTER XI.

IS MAJESTY THE KING OF THE ISLES.

"A merry madman this!"—*Prout.*

———"Though this be madness, yet
There's method in't!"—*Shakespere.*

WHILE Lord Montressor pursues his search for Estelle, we must take up the fortunes of some other persons who are concerned in our narrative. But first a brief review of Victorie L'Orient's course seems necessary to the reader's better understanding of what follows:—

"'Tis hard for human actions to account,
Whether from reason, or from impulse only,"

writes the lamented Thomas Hood.

It would certainly be difficult to explain satisfactorily the motives of the course of conduct pursed by Victoire L'Orient toward the hapless lady whose evil fortune had placed her peace, if not her destiny, in his power. One would have naturally supposed that, being released from his penal life, he would have proceeded directly to England, and while her hand was yet free, would have openly de-

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manded possession of the woman whom he claimed as his wife. Why he did not do so—why, on the contrary, he chose to wait for the hour when she should bestow her hand on another, to humble her before the whole world, is the unresolved problem. Of course every theory of his motives must be purely speculative.

Judging, however, from what we have already seen of his character and have heard of his history, it is neither unreasonable nor uncharitable, to suppose the following to have been the case:

A man like Victoire L'Orient, of depressed moral and intellectual nature, usually feels a strong antagonism to a woman who is brought into constant and rebuking comparison with himself, especially when that woman is his own wife, whom he deems should of right be in all respects his inferior and subordinate. Very soon must Monsieur Victoire have discovered the moral and intellectual excellence of the young creature whom he had ensnared, and consequently the wide disparity of character between himself and her. This alone was sufficient to have galled a spirit so egotistical as his own. And when we remember that in addition to this, Estelle inevitably detected his utter unworthiness, and that, notwithstanding her sweet patience and forbearance, she must unavoidably, through the very truthfulness and ingenuousness of her character, have revealed the low estimation in which she held him, we need not feel any degree of surprise that his selfish passion for her was largely alloyed with hate, and that his desire to possess, was quite equalled by his wish to humble her.

With these feelings and purposes, having been pardoned, or having served out his time in Algiers, he embarked in the "Duc D'Anjou" for France. Picked up by an Algerine corsair from the wreck of that vessel, he had been reconveyed to the Barbary States. Escaping thence, he once more returned to Europe.

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He came to England to claim the hand of Estelle, or, failing to obtain it, to extort money from her parents as the price of silence and absence.

But on arriving at Exeter, and hearing of her approaching nuptials with the Viscount Montressor, and being ignorant of the good and sufficient reasons she possessed for supposing himself to be deceased, all the most malignant passions of his heart were enkindled, and all the most cunning faculties of his mind were employed to enable him to meet the exigency in a manner that should at the same time punish Estelle and profit himself.

Feeling no doubt of the legality of that rite by which he supposed he had secured her person and fortune, yet fearing, nevertheless, that in the event of his *then* claiming her hand, her father would interfere, and, by means of his vast wealth and influence, contrive to invalidate, or in some other manner break the bond that united them, he, with a demon's art, resolved to reserve himself, to conceal the fact of his existence for awhile, to allow her—unconscious of his presence in the country—to go to the altar, and then, armed with a warrant for her arrest, spring a trap upon her.

Not that he intended she should suffer the extreme penalty of the law; but that he wished to degrade her in the eyes of the whole world, so that even her haughty parents should be willing, as their only resort, to resign her, with her fortune, to his possession. To accomplish this end, it had been his purpose, after the interruption of the nuptials by the arrest of the bride, to have had an explanation, and come to a compromise with Estelle's family, and in the event of their closing with his terms, to have withdrawn his witnesses, so that at the trial before the Judge of the Assizes, there should be no evidence against her, who, being then free, though ruined, would fall to his undisputed possession.

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Fortunately for Estelle, her advocate, Lord Dazzleright, at once detected the policy of the prosecuting party. And the manner in which the charge was met and the defense conducted at the preliminary investigation, disabused Monsieur Victoire of the false hope of obtaining possession of Estelle, and at the same time aroused all the vindictive passions of his nature, that instigated him to have her prosecuted to the utmost extent of the law.

Upon the occasion of the trial before the Assizes, the charge of the Judge to the jury—in which his lordship distinctly declined to pronounce upon the validity of the alleged first marriage, declaring that to be a matter for the adjudication of the spiritual courts—had again, however irrationally, revived his hopes.

At the conclusion of the trial, he determined to keep trace of Estelle, and to file a petition to be heard upon his claim, before the Court of Arches.

He soon discovered the flight of Estelle to London, and subsequently her embarkation for Baltimore.

In pursuit of her he took passage on the Mercury bound for the same port.

But Monsieur Victoire had still another motive, (which shall be revealed,) for his voyage to America.

The most debased and unfortunate of wretches possibly have some friends whom they love or by whom they are beloved. And this miserable Victoire had his mother, who doted on him, and a fellow voyager on whom he doted. The name of the last mentioned was Julius Luxmore. How he had first become acquainted with this young man it is not necessary now to relate. It is sufficient to say that he had known him intimately for about two years.

From the moment of Victoire L'Orient's embarkation on board the Mercury, his spirits had suffered a reaction into gloom and apathy, to which those of his volatile nation are frequently subject. And this despondency increased with

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every league of the voyage, until, when half across the Atlantic ocean, it amounted to absolute despair. He passed much of the day in leaning over the bulwarks of the vessel, gazing gloomily into the sea, and sometimes muttering to himself:

"I shall never see Etoile! I shall never see Etoile!"

One afternoon he was thus standing in the stern of the vessel with his elbow resting on the taffrail, his chin leaning upon his hand, and his eyes fixed intently upon the foaming sea in the wake of the vessel, when his friend came up to his side, touching his elbow, and said, cheerily:

"Come, come, shipmate! Do you think we are near a sunken reef? And are you making leaden plummets of your eyeballs to take the soundings? What are you gazing at?"

"*Mon tombeau,*" answered the Frenchman, gloomily.

"'These things must not be thought on after these ways so, it will make us mad,' as the tender-hearted Lady Macbeth says."

"*Mais, mon Dieu!* I shall never see Etoile! I shall never see Etoile!"

"'Consider it not so deeply!' I think you have every thing to hope. You must not judge her inclinations by the action of her counsel. Reflect; she has fled from Lord Montressor, not from you!"

"Grand heaven! who talks of her? It is not of Estelle, my demon of a wife, that I speak!" exclaimed Victoire, shrugging his shoulders.

"Of whom then? Etoile—Etoile—I never heard the name. Has Monsieur Victoire perhaps *consoled* himself for the absence of Madame Estelle?" inquired Luxmore in a tone of railery.

"Ah! no, no," replied the Frenchman in the same mournful tone—"I speak of my child—my daughter—my pretty little Etoile!"

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"Your child!" exclaimed Luxmore in astonishment.

"Yes, my friend. Mon Dieu! Yes, my daughter, my dear Etoile!"

"But you never told me you had a child?"

"But yes, mon Dieu! I have! I did from all the fact conceal. Listen you. You shall hear. That woman of perdition, Estelle, had a child—a daughter?"

"Is it possible! and that child lives?"

"Yes, yes! my beautiful Etoile! My princess of the Isle! My star of the sea!" exclaimed the Frenchman, with real or feigned enthusiasm.

"You astonish me. And her mother——?"

"Does not know she lives. Attend you. I will, from you, nothing hide. She has an uncle—the King of the isle."

"Eh? What?" exclaimed the other in perplexity.

"I have an uncle—the King of the Isle."

"My poor Victoire, has grief unsettled your reason?"

"Why?"

"Just now you spoke of your daughter as princess of the Isle, but as you also called her a star of the sea, I considered both phrases figurative. Now, however, when you talk gravely of your uncle, who is the King of the Island——"

"But grand Dieu! my dear and good friend, you comprehend not. I have one uncle who is a bachelor—old and rich, and resident for a long time upon an island in the sea. But, mon Dieu! he is foolish, imbecile, idiotic," said Victoire, in a tone of real or assumed grief.

"I am sorry, since it distresses you; but I cannot see what your mad uncle has to do with the life of your daughter or the ignorance of her mother."

"But, my faith! it has a great deal to do with both the one and the other. Attend you. I shall nothing conceal. Regard you. You shall know all. Listen you, then, my dear friend!"

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And Monseiur Victoire L'Orient commenced an explanation which I beg leave to disembarrass from his idiomatic French and broken English and give in less unintelligible language.

It seems from the representations of Monsieur Victoire that the family of "L'Orient" really once belonged to the ancient seignory of Provence. The younger and of course poorer branch of that family, were of the company of French Roman Catholics who went out with Lord Baltimore's emigrant troop, and settled the province of Maryland.

This particular family fixed upon one of the loveliest and loneliest of the Islands of the Chesapeake, and from that day, through several successive generations, held it in their exclusive possession. Indeed, their greatest desire, their hereditary passion, seemed to be to keep this beloved and beauteous Island in the family.

In all these years the intercourse between the European and the American branches of the old house was not suffered to wane. On the contrary, several successive intermarriages had revived and consolidated the relationship. Thus when an heir of the Island reached man's estate, his choice of a bride was limited by the number of his marriageable female cousins in France. Or if a daughter happened to be the sole heiress, a husband was found for her among the males of the same.

The American branch of the house, were called for distinction L'Oriens *de l'Ile* (or, of the Island). But this term in the course of time became a second surname, or a sort of title, so that the owners of the Island was always called Monsieur L'Orient De L'Ile. And any European L'Orient who married a sole heiress of the Island became in her right, also Monsieur L'Orient De L'Ile;—though by his American neighbors of the coast, he was called simply Mr. De L'Ile.

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We all know that successive intermarriages are not favorable to any race. Hence it is not surprising that the family of L'Oriens De L'Ile gradually died out. And the last lineal descendant, Monsieur Hubert De L'Ile, who married his first cousin, had neither son nor daughter to succeed him.

The European branch of the house that had remained in Franch, and had married into other families, continued, on the contrary, to be a handsome and vigorous race.

And of such was the father of Monsieur Victoire.

But Monsieur Victoire had, as he says, an uncle, the elder brother of his father. This man, Monsieur Henri L'Orient, was socially a bachelor and an oddity, and politically a royalist and a Bourbonist. He had one grand passion, and that was for—islands! or perhaps I should say for the family Island in the Chesapeake, to which he was heir presumptive. During the lifetime of Monsieur and Madame Hubert De L'Ile, he made several voyages to the Chesapeake, and spent many months on the Island. His love of the place was immense, his praise of it extravagant, his compliments to the proprietors as sincere as they were overwhelmning.

"You are like a king and queen here! you are in your insular domain! Your kingdom is only bounded by the infinite sea!"

Thus he became a great favorite with the childless old people, who would laughingly reply:

"Ah, well! if it is so, if we are a king and queen, then you are the prince and the heir of the kingdom."

And at their death they left a will bequeathing the Island to Monsieur Henry L'Orient, and in case the latter should die without children, to Monsieur Victoire L'Orient and his heirs forever.

Monsieur Henri L'Orient was sixty years old when he "came to his kingdom." It was not likely that he would

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take a wife and become the father of sons and daughters at that age. So he invited his younger brother, with his family, to accompany him to his insular domain. But Madame, his sister-in-law, who was at that time young, pretty, fashionable and extravagant, preferred the saloons of Paris to the loveliest Island in the world. And so Monsieur Hubert took leave of his relatives, and departed alone for his "kingdom."

And years passed, during which the old man was too much attached to his Island, and his relatives in Paris too much devoted to pleasure, to permit an exchange of visits.

But fifteen years after the separation, Madame was a widow without youth, beauty or riches. And her good brother-in-law wrote, proposing that she should come and bring her son and take up her residence with him.

But oh, horror! Madame could not think of such a thing! She infinitely preferred to trust to her own resources in Paris, rather than to go out to live among "mulattos and mud turtles on his Island in the Bay."

And with the help of friends, Madame opened her Pensionnat des Demoiselles.

Five more years passed, and old Monsieur Henri grew older in the solitude of his insular "kingdom." Now, whether it were the effect of his strange and lonely life, the approach of extreme old age, or the misfortunes of his beloved Bourbons, or all of these causes combined, I know not, but the mind of the old man became deranged upon one subject, his grand passion became a monomania, his jest grew earnest, his ownership of the Island appeared the sovereignty of a kingdom, and his letters to his sister-in-law and nephew were signed—with more rigid formality of course than a real monarch would have used—

"HENRI, BY GRACE OF GOD, KING OF THE ISLES."

For as his monomania grew, he imagined that his sovereign sway extended over all the Islands of the Bay. At

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first. as his letters betrayed no other sign of the writer's mental alienation, his sister-in-law deemed this signature an odd piece of pleasantry, as indeed in the first instance it might have been; but when letter after letter came, gravely signed in this manner, and when, in addition, he expressed his great anxiety to see her son, the "Prince," his nephew—Madame's eyes were opened!

"This unfortunate old beast is mad!" she said; "we must look after him!"

But just as Madame came to this conclusion, her own especial family affairs demanded her exclusive attention. Her son Monsieur Victoire was on trial for treason; Victoire's baby-bride had a baby of her own that must be concealed; her "pensionnat" was broken up; her character was impeached; and finally the necessity of a change of residence was for all these reasons imperative. She only waited the result of Victoire's trial, and when he was condemned to Algiers, she gathered together the remnants of her property, turned the whole into cash, took her stolen grandchild, whom she chose, for private reasons of her own, to represent, for the present, to its mother, as dead,—and went down to Dijon. Thence she wrote to her brother-in-law, "His Majesty, the King of the Isles," that her son, the 'Prince," his nephew, had experienced unheard-of misfortunes, through his devotion to his allies, the Bourbons; and that he was now banished to Algeria. But that his "Highness" had left a child, an infant daughter, an angel of beauty; and—what should she do with this child?

The course of months brought back the old man's answer. The "King of the Isles" expressed the most exalted admiration of his nephew, the Prince's heroism, and the most profound sorrow for his misfortunes; and ended by entreating his unhappy sister-in-law to bring the "Princess," her granddaughter, to be educated at his own court.

"Great Heaven! that old animal is very mad! I hope

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he is not dangerous! Very well! if he should be, his negro slaves are strong enough to bind him at my command. And who will have a better right to command than I when I get there?" said Madame, who being a prompt as well as courageous woman, immediately wrote to the "Island King," saying that she should quickly follow her letter, and have the honor of presenting the "Princess" at the court of His Majesty. And so in the course of a few weeks Madame, having in charge the yearling child, embarked on board the "Sirene," bound from Havre to Baltimore, engaging the captain to put her on shore at L'Orient, or East Island.

It was after a prosperous voyage of two months, and upon a most beautiful morning in May, that Madame was early aroused from her berth to get ready to go on shore. Upon occasion she could be quick in making her toilet, so in twenty minutes from the opening of her eyes she stood upon the deck, looking out for the long-talked of, the beloved, the beauteous Island.

There it lay before her, in its more than ideal loveliness! There it lay like an emerald on the bosom of the bay! A beautiful green island, dimpled with hill and valley, veined with limpid streams, studded with gray and mossy rocks, shaded with tall groves, and environed by the blue waters that leaped and sparkled in the morning sun like a living sea of liquid sapphires! There was a vivid and delicate freshness of hue in the luxuriant vegetation of the Isle, as peculiar as it was delightful. Far in the interior, from amidst the green beauty of the grove, arose the many tall, white chimneys of the Island mansion. Scattered about in picturesque groups, were the white cottages of the negro servants. Down on the beach was a white boat-house, built in the shape of a Chinese pagoda.

Madame gazed in a sort of enthusiasm upon the scene.

"It is a magnificent place, after all! My faith! those

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comical De L'Iles did well to adore it! As for me, I shal take that old madman in hand! I shall assume the direction of affairs. I shall introduce a new order of things I shall form the acquaintance of the gentry on the main land. I shall give *fetes* and dances! My Heaven! I must amuse myself, or else I shall die of grief for poor Victoire, or go mad like His Majesty, the King of the Isles! And at last Victoire will come back; or at least my little Etoile will grow up; and by-the-by, it is very fortunate, my faith! that I have this child as a passport to acceptance!" soliloquised Madame.

And she had scarcely had time thus to lay out her future before the long-boat came around to the starboard gangway, and her trunks were lowered into it.

"The boat awaits the pleasure of Madame," said the captain, offering himself to assist her in the descent. Madame was carefully seated, the babe was put in her arms, the six sailors plied their oars, and the boat skimmed like a sea-bird the surface of the sparkling waters.

Ten minutes brought them to the landing-place on the Isle—a little pier beside the boat-house, painted white, and ascended by three steps.

From this pier an avenue of half a mile in length, shaded by beautiful trees, led up through fields and pleasure-grounds, toward the house. All this, Madame saw at a glance, while the boat was pushed up and moored.

But upon the pier stood a most interesting group—namely, "His Majesty, the King of the Isles," and the chief ministers of his court—in other words, Monsieur Henri De L'Isle and a half dozen of his negro men.

Madame gazed in a sort of consternation—she had expected to find a very aged, decrepit, driveling madman. "His Majesty," on the contrary, though eighty years of age, was still one of the finest looking men she had ever set her eyes upon—tall, broad shouldered, and erect in form,

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with a fresh, handsome, noble countenance, surrounded by a thick growth of hair and beard as white as snow. He wore a purple cashmere morning-gown folded like a royal robe about his person. His manner was dignified and courteous, as he stood waiting to receive his guests. The half-dozen negro men that were with him were neatly dressed in white trousers and pink shirts, and were remarkable for their healthful and joyous appearance.

"Very good! the madman and his familiars are not so ill to look upon!" said Madame, as with the child in her arms she left the boat.

Monsieur Henri, with the air of the Grand Monarque, came down to meet her.

"Welcome, illustrious lady and beloved sister! welcome to our court, our kingdom, and our heart!" he said, holding out both his hands.

"I thank you, Monsiegneur!" replied Madame. But as she was embarrassed with the babe in her arms, she could not accept his offered courtesy.

"Why, how then! is Madame, my sister, left without her retinue? And has the Princess, my niece, no attendance?" exclaimed Monsieur Henri, looking excessively shocked.

"Madame the Duchesse de Berri had no more, when she wandered in La Vendee!" said our Madame, demurely.

"Oh, miserable country!—oh, unfortunate princes!" exclaimed the old man, lifting his hands and raising his eyes to heaven. Then—"Give me the illustrious babe," he said; and taking the child in his arms with the solemn air of a bishop, who was about to baptize it, he called to one of his negroes—"Come hither, Monsieur Louis."

A tall, aged man, with a very black skin, and very white hair, who was clothed like the others, in a pink shirt and white trousers, approached and bowed respectfully.

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"This is my High Constable of the Kingdom, Madame," said Monsieur De L'Ile, introducing the new comer.

Then placing the infant solemnly in the arms of the old negro, he charged him, saying—

"Receive your Princess, Monsieur Louis! and bear her on before us to the palace! I follow with Madame."

Without suffering a muscle of his very intelligent face to change, the old negro received the babe, and led the way up the shaded avenue toward the house.

"August lady, and dear sister, will you accept my arm?" said Monieur Henri, bowing and offering his services with the air of Chevalier Bayard.

"I thank you, Monsiegneur," said the 'august lady,' suffering him to draw her arm within his own, and lead her on, up the lovely, shadowy walk, through the shrubberies, the pleasure grounds, and the flower gardens. There were so many flowers! especially roses!—'roses, everywhere roses'—they flushed all the green island with their bloom, and filled all the air with their perfume. They clustered thicker as you approached the white house with its many tall chimneys, and its central front portico. They climbed its posts, and ran along its eaves and cornices, and shaded its windows.

"What a beautiful, beautiful place!" said Madame, in rapture.

Monsieur Henri led her up the white stone stairs of the portico, through the front door, and into a broad central hall from which several half-open doors on either side revealed glimpses of many spacious rooms in their summer array of straw matting, white curtains, linen covers, and many flowers; while the wide open doors at the back of the hall exposed a pleasant view of gardens, vineyards, and orchards, sloping down to the shore.

"Welcome to my court, illustrious Madame," said Monsieur De L'Ile, opening the first door on his right, and

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ushering his guest into a pleasant, airy parlor. He led her to an arm-chair, placed her in it, and then rang for attendance.

The bell was answered by the appearance of a handsome and even very intellectual-looking mulatto woman, of about thirty years of age, who courtesied and stood waiting.

"This is Mademoiselle Madeleine, the first lady of your bed-chamber, Madame," said Monsieur Henri, presenting the woman to her new mistress.

"And now, Mademoiselle, conduct your august mistress to her apartment. Monsieur Louis? Ah, you are there! Deliver the Princess into the charge of Mademoiselle."

The woman took the babe, and bowing to Madame, led the way upstairs to a suite of apartments on the right side of the central hall, whose many windows looked out upon the beautiful pleasure grounds of the Island and upon the surrounding sea, and whose summer furniture was arranged with the nicest regard to comfort and elegance.

"My faith, the lunatic knows how to keep house," thought the lady. Then turning to her attendant, she inquired:

"Does your master ever become violent?"

"Madame?"

"I ask you, does your master ever become ungovernable —dangerous?"

"Pardon. I do not understand Madame," said the woman, gravely and respectfully.

"You *will* not, I suspect," muttered the lady; then aloud, she asked:

"How long has your master been mad?"

"Pardon. Madame has been misinformed; my master is not mad."

"Your master is not mad!" exclaimed the lady, in astonishment.

"No, Madame," replied the mulatto, calmly.

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"You tell me that your master, Monsieur Henri De L'Ile, is not mad?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Then, if he is not mad, I should not wonder if you told me next that he is King of the Isles."

"Certainly, Madame, he is King of the Isles."

"How? Your master, Monsieur De L'Ile, King of the Isles?"

"Assuredly, Madame, since he says it."

"Oh, then, since this is so, I see how it is. I have arrived at Bedlam, and we are all lunatics together!" exclaimed the visitor, highly provoked.

"Has Madame any orders?" inquired the woman, humbly.

"Yes; lay that child on the bed, and go and send Louis to me."

"Yes, Madame." And the woman left the room to do her errand.

In a few moments, Louis appeared at the chamber door, bowed and stood waiting.

"Louis, how long has your master been mad?" inquired the lady, peremptorily.

"Forgive, but Madame has been deceived; my master is not mad."

"Then I suppose that he is really King of the Isles?" questioned the guest, ironically.

"Undoubtedly, Madame, since he says."

"And he is not mad?"

"Assuredly not, Madame."

"Then I am, that is all."

"Has Madame any orders?"

"No—yes; tell Madeleine to return to me."

The old man bowed deeply and retired.

Madame clasped her temples with both hands.

"Yes," she said; "it is I, without doubt, who am mad, or shall soon become so. Here I arrive at the extremity

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of the civilized world—the very jumping-off place, and what do I find? a courtly madman, who calls himself King of the Isles, and a pair of mulatto savages, who address me in the elegantly turned phrases of the Tuileries, and confirm his title——Ah, in a good hour! here comes Mademoiselle, my maid of honor!"

The entrance of the mulatto put an end to Madame's soliloquy, and suggested the propriety of arranging her toilet. With the assistance of Madeleine, her black satin dressing-gown was arranged, her well-dyed black ringlets smoothed, the white lace collar and mits put on, and Madame was ready to go down to breakfast.

Madeleine remained to take care of the child.

Louis stood outside the door, bowed, and preceded the lady to show her the way to the breakfast parlor.

It was a delightful room on the right hand of the hall, with its floor covered with straw matting. Its many muslin-draped windows were open to a view of rolling green meadows, covered with tender spring vegetation, and variegated with apple, peach, and cherry trees, all in full bloom. And beyond, the wide expanse of sparkling, leaping blue water stretched away until its boundaries were lost under the purple, crimson, and gold of the morning horizon.

The breakfast table, covered with fine white damask, and adorned with a service of silver and white Sevres, was laden with all the luxuries of the season.

Monsieur De L'Ile (unless the reader prefers that I should call him the King of the Isles) stood ready to hand Madame to the table—an act of gallantry that he performed with the stately courtesy of a Guise or a Medici.

Louis took his stand at a sideboard that stood between two of the open windows, and from whence he served coffee, tea, or chocolate.

Madame had enough to do to watch her host. She engaged him in conversation, hoping to be able to measure

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the extent of his insanity, and to find out whether, and how best, she could wrest from his aged hands the control of his own property: first, whether she could not do it without having *recourse* to law; secondly, whether she could do it even *through* law. Of the first there was little hope; the old man's mind upon every subject but the one, acted with a vigor, clearness, and directness that proved him to be a very unlikely subject for even the most artful woman's government; of the second there was no certainty, for, though upon one idea he was undoubtedly mad, yet, upon the first suspicion of her purpose to subject him to a medical or a judicial examination, he would assuredly have the cunning to conceal his madness—a measure in which he would be supported by his two educated slaves, Louis and Madeleine, who, for whatever reason, were certainly flatterers of his mania.

However, Madame was not a woman rashly to resign a purpose, or grow hopeless of its accomplishment.

And all this time, while her head was busily brewing plots, the old man, the purposed victim of her machinations, was loading her with compliments and attentions.

When breakfast was over, Madame set herself to arrange her own personal attendance. Madeleine was retained as her maid. And a pretty mulatto girl named Coralie, the younger sister of Madeleine, was appointed nurse to the "Princess Etoile." Frivole, the boy brother of those girls was brought from the garden into the house as page and messenger. And Madame's establishment was complete.

The next day was the Sabbath. Madame was a devout Roman Catholic, and a scrupulous attendant upon mass. Here was a difficulty not thought of before. Where and how should she attend mass? She early rang her bell.

Her maid answered the summons.

"Madeleine, how far are we from the main land?"

"About fifty miles."

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"Very good. How far is the nearest Catholic chapel from this?"

"St. Inigoes, the nearest, Madame, is fifty miles."

"Better! Madeleine, my brother-in-law, your master, his Majesty the King of the Isles, when he was simply Monsieur Henri, used to be a good Catholic."

"And he is so still, Madame."

"But good Catholics are under obligations to hear mass once every Sunday."

"Yes, Madame"

"'Yes, Madame.' It is very well to say, 'Yes, Madame, but how upon earth do you reconcile the neglect of that duty on the part of your master with your declaration that he is still a good Catholic?"

"But Madame will pardon me. She hastens to conclusions. My master does not neglect his Christian duties."

"Then I should be glad to know how he performs them. You do not mean to say that he goes fifty miles to hear mass at St. Inigoes?"

"No, Madame."

"How then?"

"His Holiness the Pope offers up Mass here every Sunday, before breakfast."

"Eh?"

"His Holiness the Pope offers up Mass here every Sunday, before breakfast, in the chapel fitted up for that purpose."

"Oh! my head! my head!" cried the poor woman, wildly clapping her hands to her temples.

"Is Madame ill?" coolly inquired the mulatto.

"Ill? Is all the world raving mad? You tell me, you impertinent! you impudent! you insolent! outrageous ——! You tell me that the Pope says Mass here every Sunday!"

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"Madame can assure herself of that fact," replied Madeleine, with an humble, but injured look.

"I shall go mad! I got over your King of the Isles, your Lord High Constable, and your Princess Etoile—but his Holiness the Pope saying Mass here every Sunday—no! I won't endure that!"

"Madame undoubtedly has the privilege to object!"

"Begone!"

"Yes, Madame. But pardon me for delaying long enough to say my master bade me inform you, that High Mass would be celebrated in the chapel this morning; and that Louis would be in attendance to conduct you thither."

"Begone, I say, while I have some rationality left!"

"Certainly, Madame."

"Stop! come back; help me to dress; I will go to the chapel that the dream may be finished, and I may wake up the sooner."

Madeleiene obediently came back.

Madame quickly made her toilet and left her chamber, at the door of which she found Louis waiting to attend her.

"Louis, is it true that Mass will be celebrated here this morning?"

"Yes, Madame."

"But who will officiate?"

"Our Most Holy Father, the Pope!"

"Go to the ——. I mean go on before me."

Madame had nearly permitted herself, in her indignation, to use profane language.

Louis, undisturbed by his mistress's excitement, walked down before her, until he paused before the door of the chapel, which was one of those pleasant rooms on the first floor.

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Madame entered, and found herself in an apartment fitted up as a church.

At the upper extremity stood an altar adorned with sacred pictures and statuettes, wreathed with flowers, and lighted with many wax candles. From a silver censer burning before it, arose a rich aroma that filled the air. Dark, rich transparencies pulled down before the windows produced something of the effect of stained glass, and threw over the scene an atmosphere at once brilliant and solemn. Between every window was some picture of saint, or angel. Rows of neat white benches supplied the place of pews. All the slaves of the Island plantation, dressed in their summer Sunday suits of pure white, were here assembled, with a quiet and devout demeanor. Before the altar, with his back to the congregation, stood a very tall and dignified old man in the triple-crowned mitre and the pontifical robes and vestments of his Holiness the Pope.

Madame sank into the nearest seat through the sheer exhaustion produced by an overwhelming astonishment. What did this mean? Who was this person? How dared any subordinate priest, bishop, or archbishop, or even cardinal, assume the pontifical robes?

The strains of an organ now arose, swelling on the air. She looked around—saw the organ, it was behind her, and beside the door by which she had entered, but a screen reaching half way up the instrument, concealed the organist from her view. What *did* it all mean?

But the Mass had commenced, and Madame was too devout a Catholic to stop to think when it was time to pray. So down she dropped upon her knees, and began in the form of the ritual, and in her case, no doubt, with the exactest truth, to accuse herself of every sin in the catalogue. And in her devotions she forebore to look about or raise her eyes again to the mysterious old man who officiated at the alta-

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At last at the conclusion of the solemnities, when the celebrant turned round toward the people, and solemnly extending his venerable hands, intoned "Deus Gratias," (Thanks be to God,) Madame raised her eyes, and to her inexpressible scandalization, recognized Monsieur Henri.

"Good! This is better than the rest! He is a king all the week and the Pope on Sunday. But it would be a mortal sin in me to allow *this* madness to go on any longer! I would put up with the king for six days, but the Pope, Holy Virgin! no, that must be stopped. I'll make an excuse of an errand to town, get him to let me have a barque, and go to the mainland, and to the County seat, and take out a writ of lunacy against him. I will lose no time. I will do this to-morrow."

While Madame thus resolved, the congregation were quietly dispersing. As there was but one outlet to this room, the officiating priest himself came down; and in passing by his guest, he paused, extended his hands over her head in the most solemn and benignant manner, and said, gravely and slowly—

"Benedicite, illustrious daughter," and then in measured steps passed out.

Sunday, on the Sunrise Island, was a day of Heaven—as the Isle itself was a terrestrial paradise.

The fifty servants, entirely freed from labor at the time, and dressed in their festive garments, wandered about with their children, in couples, trios or groups—over the green fields, beside the singing streams, or along the silvery sanded beach; or they sat in groups under the shady groves; or reposed, stretched at length, beneath some gigantic tree; or gathered in some large arbor around some one of their number, who had been taught to read, and who read to them from the Book of books; or else they united their voices in a psalm of thanksgiving that arose joyously from that green and blooming Island of the sea, filling all

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the sunny air with music. And the lovely day was followed by a moonlight night, and their Sabbath recreations were closed by the assembling of the whole band of servants, and the singing of an evening hymn. Then, after partaking of the simple Sunday supper of coffee, cakes and fruit, served under the trees, they separated for the night.

And Monsieur Henri, no longer pope, but king, sat upon his front piazza, with his niece upon his knee, his sister-in-law beside him, and his two favorite servants Madeleine and Louis near at hand, and watched the departing figures of his people as they defiled off in twos and threes and larger groups, toward their respective neat, white cabins.

"My subjects are happy, I think, my dear sister! At least it is my study to make them so! And they love me! Yes, they love me! That is what keeps my old age green," said the old man.

And assuredly no people in the world were happier as a community than these dependants of the good old man—these subjects of a self-styled king.

"They seem contented and prosperous," said Madame.

"They have nothing left to wish for, and on their side leave me nothing to desire. Neither have I any cares of governmeut—Louis manages all my affairs," said the old man with a look of infinite content.

The next day, Monday, "His Majesty" requested a private interview with his "august sister," in which he begged that she would give him a full and particular account of her illustrious son, "the Prince," his nephew's misfortunes. And Madame gave a distorted version of the truth—relating that Monsieur Victoire had been condemned to the colonies for conspiring in favor of the Bourbons, and that his young wife, an English Lady of high rank, had abandoned him in his misfortunes. The mind of the old man in attending to this story seemed divided between exalted

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admiration for the heroism, and profound sorrow for the misfortunes of his nephew.

They then talked of the affairs of the Island. And Madame learned from all she heard and saw, that Monsieur Henri De L'Ile, notwithstanding his monomania, and perhaps even *because* of it, was one of the best of masters and wisest of rulers—truly deserving to be called by the threefold titles that he claimed of King, Priest, and Father of his people.

He had, on first coming to the Island, found Louis and Madeleine—a bright intelligent brother and sister, the former twenty, the latter ten years of age. He had taught them both to read, write, and keep accounts. They were both perfectly devoted to his person and interests, and in the twenty years of his residence on the Island, an attachment had grown up between himself and them, that more nearly resembled the confidential friendship of equals, than the relative regard of master and servants. Yet their reverential affection for their master amounted to idolatry. No absurdity of which the old man through his monomania might be guilty, could provoke from their respectful countenances a smile. They seemed really to wish to believe him to be a king, rather than to admit him to be a madman. Never for an instant was their guarded reverence for him surprised or betrayed. No matter how sudden, startling, and perplexing the questions, put by Madame upon the subject of their master's madness—their answers were always ready, grave, respectful, and uncompromising.

"Pray, how long has it been since Monsieur Henri has enjoyed the dignity of being a king all the week and a pope on Sunday?" inquired Madame of Louis that identical Monday morning.

To us, ever since he first announced himself as such, Madame," replied Louis, with an humble bow..

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"Pray, has Monsieur Henri friends and neighbors on the main land?" questioned the lady of Madeleine.

"Very many, Madame."

"And do they know that he is mad?"

"They cannot know that since he is not, Madame," replied the woman deferentially.

And Madame never could surprise either Louis or Madeleine, or any other servant on the plantation into the slightest betrayal of a suspicion that any thing was amiss with their master's brain.

This brother and sister were the mainstays of their old master. Louis managed his farm, orchard, vineyard, garden and fishery, and attended to the sale of the products of the whole. Madeleine kept his house, table and wardrobe in order, and nursed him through any indisposition. Madame saw at once that she herself was a supernumerary in the establishment; that the position assigned to her was that of a most honored guest, most welcome to remain forever, but neither expected nor desired to take any trouble, or assume any responsibility in the government of the family. Now this position was by no means acceptable to her feelings, and she resolved to carry into immediate execution her purpose of going that day to the mainland to apply for a writ of lunacy in behalf of her brother-in-law. Having ascertained from Monsieur Henri that the Island belonged to the County of Northampton, and that the county town was Eastville, she begged that he would allow her the use of the barque and the men to work it to take her to that town, where she said she wished to make some purchases of summer clothing for herself and the child.

Monsieur Henri, with the most cordial politeness, at once assented, adding that he should do himself the honor of attending his beloved sister.

Now this was quite an unexpected difficulty. His presence must defeat her object. She therefore begged that he

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would not take the trouble to accompany her, and entreating that he would regard his ease and health.

But Monsieur De L'Ile was not to be exceeded in politeness. He assured his sister-in-law that to attend her to Eastville would afford him unmixed gratification. And he further informed her that he himself had business at the court-house, that required his immediate attention.

There was therefore nothing for her to do but to submit to necessity and trust to circumstances to favor her design. And since he was really himself going to the court-house, that very event might so turn out as to enable her, without difficulty, to deliver him into the hands of the proper authorities for his safe custody. She therefore affected to accept his proffered services with great thankfulness.

He informed her, however, that it would require a whole day to go and return from Eastville, and that therefore, if she pleased, he would give orders for the barque to be made ready for service by sunrise next morning.

To that feature of the plan, also, she assented with seeming gratitude.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SKIPPER'S DAUGHTER.

"This should become a noble creature, she
Hath all the energy that should construct
A goodly whole of glorious elements,
If they be wisely mingled by her will."—*Byron.*

How gloriously, the next day, arose the summer sun upon that green and blooming and odoriferous island.

Madame, from the rose-wreathed balcony of her front

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chamber window, looked out upon the delightful scene, as upon some poetic elysium, encircled by the crystal sea. It was indeed an enchanting vision. The whole isle was carpeted with a brilliant green verdure, sparkling with dew-drops, and enameled with flowers of every elegant form and beautiful color and delicious fragrance!—myriads upon myriads of roses, rose-bushes, rose-trees, and rose-vines—roses clustering, climbing, twisting and twining, everywhere—columns and colonades, piazzas, balconies, trellises, and arbors, all wreathed and covered and vailed and festooned with roses, that flushed all the green Isle with their intense and vivid blushes, and filled the air with their rich aroma. There were groves of ornamental trees of luxuriant beauty and fragrance—the flowering almond with its delicate perfume, and soft white blossoms, seeming as if a fall of summer snow had lighted on its elegant tendrils; the lanton-belle with its heavy shade and clustering purple tufts and odoriferous breath; the red-bud with its brilliant green foliage and scarlet-drops; the stately tulip-poplar, with its fiery hanging bells; the queenly catalpa, with its aromatic odor; the imperial magnolia, with its deep green, shining leaves, and "all Arabia's spices" in its pure white vase-like cups; orchards of peach, apple, cherry, apricot and plum-trees, all covered with their pink, white or variegated flowers; walks flanked with raspberries, gooseberries, and currant-bushes, all in full blossom. And lastly, through the intervening branches of the fragrant flowering locusts that overhung the silvery-sanded beach, gleamed the snow-white sails of the fairy barque, the "Sylph," that fluttered in the morning breeze like the wings of some beauteous sea-bird—beyond this flashed and sparkled the deep blue sea, and above all glowed the crimson, purple, and golden glory around the rising sun.

Madame had scarcely taken in this sublime, beautiful and enchanting vision, when Louis rapped at the chamber door

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and announced that the breakfast, the boat, and his master, all waited Madame's pleasure.

She descended to the breakfast parlor, where she found the table spread, and Monsieur Henri equipped for his journey.

And after the morning meal of rich coffee, delicate bread, fresh butter and eggs, and delicious fruit and cream, Monsieur Henri announced himself as waiting the orders of Madame, and gallantly conducted her to the barque.

The Sylph was a beautiful sail-boat, gayly painted green on the side, and white and red within. Her deck and ropes and sails were clean and nice as a lady's face and hands and dress. From the mainmast streamed a snow-white pennant studded with the golden lilies of France.

Four negro sailors in neat straw-hats, blue shirts and white trousers, stood on the deck waiting commands. They doffed their hats to the master and to the lady, as the two latter appeared.

Monsieur Henri assisted Madame to gain the deck, and seated her in a comfortable willow-chair under a canopy in the stern.

Louis placed himself at the helm, the four sailors manned the capstan, the anchor was weighed, the sails filled, and the Sylph floated out upon the blue and sparkling water.

As they sailed from the eastern extremity of the Island, they were obliged to "'bout ship" and make half the circuit of the Isle, in order to steer for the Northampton coast, that lay off to the westward.

After a delightful sail of three hours they came in sight of the main land, with its rolling hills and valleys, and dark green woods and meadows.

A beautiful but solitary shore.

No house in all its length to be seen save one—an old, half-ruined, gray stone mansion, standing far out upon a

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point of land extending into the sea, and half hidden by the ancient forest trees around it.

"That is Brande's Headland, where we are going ashore," said Monsieur Henri—walking forward and giving orders to the men to strike sail and cast anchor where they were.

A small skiff was then let down from the side of the barque, Monsieur Henri and Madame got into it, followed by Louis, who took the single oar and sculled rapidly toward the beach, which they reached in a few minutes.

Monsieur, still with the air of the Chevalier Bayard, or the Grand Monarque, handed Madame from the boat, drew her arm within his own, and with the aid of a gold-headed cane, began to help himself and her up the rugged ascent of the bank.

As they reached its top, and stood upon a level with the old, dilapidated house, some three or four wild looking, handsome, healthy boys ran out to see who was coming. Two great Newfoundland dogs that lay upon the broken, stone steps, sprang up, but were immediately restrained by the appearance of a very handsome, dark-haired girl, of about thirteen years of age, who came to the front door, and laying a hand on the head of each favorite, said:

"Down, Wind! Down, Wave! Behave, boys! How dare you then? Don't you see it's Monsieur Henri?"

The dogs, still growling, unwillingly submitted, and the handsome brunette came down the old moss-grown steps to meet her visiters.

"Welcome, Monsieur Henri! but you must forgive the dogs; they know *you*, of course; it was the strange lady they objected to," said the brown maiden, extending her hand to the old gentleman, who took and shook it cordially and held it cozily, while he said:

"Ah, Barbara, Barbara, still brighter than ever, my brave girl! Why, what a woman you are growing! And how

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is the old skipper? Eh, Barbara? And the handsome young mate? Eh, Barbara?"

The young girl laughed, displaying a row of the whitest and evenest teeth in striking contrast with her cherry lips, nut-brown skin, and sloe-black hair and eyes. She was too young and guileless to blush at such a question.

"The skipper is off again? Eh, Barbara?"

"Oh, yes, sir, with a cargo of flour to Habana. He will bring back West India sugar and molasses."

"Why, what a business woman you are, Babby. You know all about every thing."

"Ay, ay, sir!" exclaimed Barbara, laughing.

"And hark ye, Monsieur"—she said, mysteriously bending toward him, and whispering so low that but the last words of her communication were heard—"for Madame."

"Oh, Barbara, Barbara, you shocking little smuggler! I ought to deliver you to the authorities."

"No, no, Monsieur. They are for Madame—the sweetmeats," said the girl.

"For Madame? Very well. I have not presented you to Madame. I must do so," he said, taking her hand with a droll formality, turning her about facing the lady, and continuing:

"Madame L'Orient, my sweetheart, Barbarie, the daughter of my brave Captain Brande, who owns and commands the good brig Kelpie, trading between this coast and the West Indies, the Bermudas, South America, England—anywhere. Ma belle Barbarie used to sail with the skipper in all his voyages, but now she stays home and takes care of the boys, while her father is at sea, and does a little in the smuggling line when he comes home—do you not?" he asked, playfully, chucking the girl under the chin.

"No—no, Monsieur!"

"Mon Dieu! she has a hamper or so of West India sweetmeats hidden away, that has never seen the outside of a

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custom house! but she does not dabble in smuggling! *she* does not! Eh, bien! She says they are for Madame, and we will excuse her and thank her."

"Will Monsieur and Madame come in and rest?" asked the maiden.

"No, no, my child—but can you let us have the old carry-all? We are going on to Eastville?"

"Oh, yes, Monsieur! Will you want me to drive?"

"No, my child; I have Louis with me, and if I had not—death of my life! do you suppose I would sit back at my ease, and allow you to hold the reins?"

"Monsieur is very polite, but he knows that I am accustomed to drive passengers from the coast to Eastville."

"Not when they are gentlemen, my pretty one! But, now! how soon can we have that carriage ready?"

"If you and Madame will walk in and sit down, I will put the horses to it directly."

"By no means, my little one! Direct my servant, Louis, where to find them—he will do it."

"But, Monsieur," said the girl, laughing, "if you patronize our house much, you will spoil me! I shall forget the use of my hands, and permit them to grow soft and white, like a lady's."

"The gallant young mate of the Kelpie will not object to that, my beauty!" said the old gentleman, who, looking around and seeing Louis coming up the bank, beckoned him to approach, and directed him to go to the stables, get the carriage out, put the horse to it and bring it around.

Louis bowed and went off toward a dilapidated pile of grey stone buildings, at some distance behind the dwelling-house, and which had probably long ago deserved the name of stables.

Since the visitors declined going into the house, Barbara ran in to bring out chairs for them.

While she was gone, Madame, looking around upon the

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desolate scene, and contrasting it mentally with the lovely island they had that morning left, exclaimed—

"What a ruinous, dilapidated old place! How can the owner allow a fine property like this to go to ruin?"

"Oh! I don't know! My good friend, Captain Brande, is fit for nothing but the waters! he nor his race! He belongs to that class of old sea dogs that have infested these coasts ever since their first settlement, and before! He married the heiress of all this property—Barbara's mother; she died, leaving him with Babby and her three little brothers. Babby has been a housekeeper for the father, and a mother for the children, which is as much as can be expected of her, poor child! But you see how the skipper has allowed the house to go to wreck and ruin."

"But do you tell me"—asked Madame—"do you mean to say that this young maiden stays here with these children day and night, without protection, in this most lonely and desolate of places?"

"Not quite; she has two faithful negro servants, an old married pair, whom she calls Neptune and Amphitrite. And then, those dogs! Either of those beasts could spring at a strong man's throat and drag him to the earth!"

"And what is that about the smuggling?"

"Why, my little Barbara takes after her salt-water progenitors, who, with charity let it be said, were all free-traders, except those who were pirates!"

"Ugh! and this young creature resembles them!" said Madame, in holy horror.

"I cannot say that she does in the matter of their piratical propensities;—but as for their buccaniering proclivities,—I tell you this young thing has such a keen relish for free-booting, that a smuggled aloe would seem sweeter to her taste than the sweetest orange that had paid duty! The little villain! she whispered me just now, that she had a hundred cannisters of West India sweetmeats, that were

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not one of them flavored with custom-house! The little scamp! how she loves the sea besides! Just to see her black eyes kindle when she speaks of a ship! If she were a boy, she would run away and go to sea; being a girl, with her propensities and in her circumstances, I don't know what will become of her! Hush! don't reply, here she is."

Barbara came out, bringing two chairs, which she placed for her visitors. Then, while they seated themselves, she ran away again, and returned, bringing a little table, which she set before them, and covered with a white cloth. And then, in two or three successive flittings into the house, she brought out the whitest bread and freshest butter, the clearest guava jelly, and the most fragrant pine-apple preserves; and lastly, a bottle of wine, that Monsieur Henri lifted up and gazed upon in consternation, exclaiming, when he had somewhat recovered his suspended breath—

"Why, you little audacious! don't you know, then, that this wine is never, *never* exported; that it is tantamount to high treason, even if it be not high sacrilege, to send it out of Italy! Why this is the Pope's own particular drink! How dared you? Where did you get it from? You perceive that I am asking you questions, Mademoiselle!"

The girl laughed merrily, exclaiming—

"Try it, Monsieur! try it! Try it, Madame."

"Not until you have told me where you got it! You perceive that I have no politeness; I persist in my questions, Mademoiselle."

"My father brought it from the Levant, when he came home from his last voyage, Monsieur," said Barbara, laughing.

"And of course every custom-house officer between there and here has drawn the cork, and inhaled the perfume?"

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"*Oh of course!* and tasted the contents and smacked his lips over it—*of course they have!*" exclaimed Barbara, laughing gayly, and clapping her hands in glee.

The luxurious little luncheon was discussed, and by the time they had finished, Louis brought the carriage around.

Monsieur Henri handed his sister-in-law into the back seat, and placed himself beside her. Louis took the front seat, gathered up the reins, and prepared to drive on. Monsieur and Madame then took leave of their young hostess, and the carriage started.

The road to Eastville lay through a thick pine woods, and the ride would have been a very pleasant one but for Madame's anxious thoughts, that kept her silent, and threw a little gloom over the whole party.

We know what Madame L'Orient's intentions were in coming to the main land this day; namely, to obtain a writ of lunacy against her kind-hearted old host, and a power of guardianship over his person and property. But was ever a woman so unfortunate as herself? she asked. For no sooner had she brought this old man away from the island than his insanity seemed to have dropped from him, as a garment, and he spoke and acted as rationally as any one, —with no air à la Grand-Monarque, no talk of crowns and sceptres, thrones and kingdoms; but with the gay and genial manners of an old French "good fellow." What was the meaning of it? Was that delightsome island, an enchanted spot, that infected its owner with the proud madness of an imaginary monarchy? And was he at once, on quitting its shores, delivered from the spell. It really seemed so.

On emerging from the pine woods, after an hour's drive, they arrived at the little hamlet of Eastville, then a small cluster of houses, built around the court-house on the cross roads.

They drove first to the village stores, that Madame might do her ostensible errand of shopping.

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And when this was over, and the little packages of linen, muslin, thread and needles, made up and put into the carriage, Madame and Monsieur re-entered, took their seats and drove to the court-house, where the court was in session and the judiciary officers all at their posts. Monsieur De L'Ile's business there was simply to pay his taxes.

Madame watched in vain for an opportunity of denouncing him as a lunatic. There was none afforded. His conversation upon all subjects—property, agriculture, manufactures, commerce, politics—with the various persons with whom he happened to fall in company, was so strong, so clear, so pointed and conclusive,—evincing an intellect so profound, powerful, and almost prophetic, that to have hinted at the possibility of his being a lunatic, would have been to expose herself to the certainty of being pronounced a maniac or an impostor. In a word, Madame felt herself constrained to defer her purpose to some more favorable opportunity.

Monsieur Henri concluded his business, and they turned their horses' heads shoreward.

It was near sunset when they reached the headland and Barbara Brande's old ruined house.

Barbara had tea ready for them. The table was set out under a great elm tree, and covered with imported, if not smuggled luxuries, such as guava jellies, anchovy paste, potted meats, etc., which Barbara exultingly declared had never been spiced with duty.

After tea they took leave of their bright, young hostess, and returned on board their barque. They sailed homeward by moonlight and arrived at early bed time.

After this, Madame made many similar attempts to convict her benefactor of mania; but always without success; for though as long as Monsieur Henri De L'Ile confined himself to the island, he was for six days of the week a king, and on the seventh a pope, yet just so soon as he left its

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shores, or received any one from the outside world upon its soil, he became a plain, cheerful, clear-headed country gentleman, whom it would have been madness to charge with lunacy. But whether on the isle or off it, whether king or countryman, Monsieur Henri ever remained the same great, generous, warm-hearted host, friend and master, dispensing happiness to all who lived on his lovely isle, beneath his benignant rule.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ISLAND PRINCESS.

"Within the island's calm retreat
She lived a sort of fairy life."—*Milnes.*

"She was a form of life and light
That seen, became a part of sight
And rose where'er I turned my eye
The Morning Star of memory."—*Byron.*

And so, as the sunny summers slipped away, in this atmosphere of love and beauty, Etoile, the peerless little "Princess of the Isle," budded from infancy into childhood. She was as lovely as the loveliest vision that ever visited a poet in his most inspired dreams. The inside of a shell was not more pearly white, or flushed with a more delicate rose tint, than her fair, transparent complexion; the yellow silk of the young corn no more golden bright than her shining ringlets; nor the modest violet of a deeper, purer blue than her heavenly eyes. Yet blonde, as she was, her fair face was a "softened image" of a *dark ladye* whom we have seen before. It was as if a dainty miniature had been copied in water colors from a fine portrait in India ink. The fair and oseate face of Etoile was, in fact, a delicate transcript of the beautiful dark face of her mother, Estelle.

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The life of this lovely child on the delightful Island passed like a heavenly dream. It was even brighter with enchanting illusions than the usual life of childhood. She was taught to believe that the stately and benignant old gentleman, her grand-uncle, was indeed a king; that she herself was in reality a princess, and that the Sunrise Island was her hereditary kingdom. "Within the Island's calm retreat she lived a sort of charmed life," never leaving her beautiful home, never even desiring to leave it. In the pleasant mansion her education was conducted by Monsieur Henri, who instructed her in what are called the solid branches of education, and by Madame, who gave her lessons in music, dancing, and embroidery. Out of the mansion, by Monsieur Henri's express commands, she was left to herself and to nature. Here she lived at liberty in a paradise, the influence of whose beneficent beauty must forever have saved her graceful wildness from breaking into unseemly rudeness. Here she played and frolicked with the innocent freedom of the squirrel, or the bird—going up into the tops of the beautiful grove trees if their umbrageous branches wooed her presence—and learning to climb as the kitten learns; or in her own retired haunts, bathing in the blue waters of the sea until her limbs grew familiar with the waves, and she learned to breast them, as the young swan learns to swim. Thus her physical organization was in the fairest way of a full and beautiful development.

And if this star-bright Etoile was taught to believe herself a princess, she was the no less instructed to consider her position a high and holy trust for the welfare and happiness of those soon to be dependent on her. Nor were these instructions so very far from the truth as at first view they might appear. For, if this lovely girl were not indeed the princess, she was certainly the *heiress*, and would be the *absolute mistress* of the Island and of the people upon it, over whom she would possess more than a queen's power, and for whom

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she would also feel more than a queen's responsibility. And so the young creature felt it. No selfish, thoughtless, childish exactions, ever embittered the unvarying sweetness of her manners to "those who labored in her fields, or waited in her halls." No harsh tone ever jarred the harmony of her voice in speaking to them. No dark frown ever clouded the brightness of her face in looking upon them. And just as surely nothing but smiles and blessings and devoted service were hers, from those affectionate creatures.

Madame was anxious to disabuse the growing girl of her royal imaginations; but Monsieur was resolved to preserve her proud and beautiful illusions. And the only occasion upon which Monsieur was ever known to give way to furious passion, was one morning when he happened to overhear Madame inform Etoile that, so far from being a princess, she was only a miserable little beggar, dependent upon the bounty and caprices of her grandfather, who, far from being a king, was only a wretched old lunatic.

Upon hearing this, Monsieur Henri burst like a storm into the room, and striking his heavy cane upon the floor, roared forth in a voice of thunder:

"WOMAN!! I have borne much from your ingratitude and deception! But dare again to doubt the royal descent of your princess, and you shall pay for your treason with your HEAD!!"

There was an awful pause.

"MADAME! do you hear?" thundered the old infuriate.

Madame *did* hear, and turned whiter than the handkerchief that she pressed to her bloodless lips, while her eyes dilated with terror until a white circle flared around their black balls. But she was past the power of speech, and could only gaze panic-stricken after the old man, as he haughtily strode from the room.

"Oh-h-h! Mon Dieu, what a situation!" exclaimed Madame, when she had recovered her breath—"the old beast!

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the old madman! the horrible old ogre! Bon Dieu! what bewitched me to come here and put myself in his power! Grand Dieu! and I am out of the reach of human help! Oh Ciel! if he should take it into his crazy brain that I am plotting, he would—off with my head in the twinkling of an eye! Don't I know he would? And this yellow demon of a Louis, who never gainsays him, whether he claims to be king or pope, would do it for him! Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! what is to become of a poor woman, whom her evil fate has committed to the care of a furious madman!"

And half-crazy with fear, Madame seized the bell-rope, and rang a peal that presently brought Louis hurrying to the room.

"Did you ring, Madame?"

"Yes! I should think I did. It is you I want! you! Come here! Tell me now—supposing that old madman were to take it into his precious head to order an execution, what would you do?"

"Madame, pardon, I do not comprehend. I know no madman."

"Diable! Suppose, then, that my brother-in-law, your master, his majesty the King of the Isles, were to order you to cut off the head of a fellow-servant, what should you do?"

"I should obey him, Madame."

"You would? Well, suppose he were to command you to decapitate a member of his own family?"

"I should do it, Madame."

"Then you would deserve to be hanged," cried the lady, breaking out into a cold sweat.

Louis bowed respectfully.

"And—supposing it were even my own head?" she gasped.

"I should have to take it off, honored Madame."

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"Mon Dieu, I shall go crazy! Begone!"

Louis bowed deeply and retired.

Madame sank back in her chair, pressing her handkerchief to her panic-stricken and ghastly face.

And from that day forth, Madame L'Orient never felt her life, for an instant, secure from the caprices of a madman. She ceased entirely to plot "against the peace and dignity of the king," and only thought of the best means of securing her personal safety until she could make her escape from the Isle.

She wished above all things to return to Paris, where she hoped that her "misfortunes," as she called her *sins*, were by this time forgotten. But to go to Paris and reside there comfortably required much money, and though Monsieur Henri was the soul of generosity, she doubted in this instance whether he would think proper to advance what she would consider sufficient funds. However, she broke the matter to him, and found Monsieur Henri very willing to aid her with money to the full extent of her desires. But when she mentioned her wish to take her grandchild Etoile to Paris, Monsieur Henri struck his cane upon the ground, which was his form of taking an oath, and swore that the "princess" should never depart from the Island, but should remain to have her education completed at his court. At length, terrified and worn out, Madame consented to leave the little girl behind.

A very favorable opportunity offered for her voyage. Captain Brande, in his fine new clipper, the "Mercury," was lying off the Headland, shipping a cargo of tobacco, preparatory to setting sail for Havre. A passage was engaged for Madame L'Orient.

And accordingly on a fine day in June, Madame bade adieu to her little granddaughter, and gallantly attended by Monsieur Henri, went on board the pretty Sylph, and sailed for the Mercury, lying off the headland. A three

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hours' run before the wind carried them alongside the clipper, where they learned that owing to a delay in the shipment of a portion of the lading, she would not weigh anchor until the next tide. There was nothing for Monsieur Henri to do then, but to take Madame to the house of Barbara Brande, to wait a few hours for the sailing of the clipper.

The old house on the Headland was more ruinous and more clumsily mended than ever.

The black-haired, bright-eyed, bare-footed boys had grown into fine lads.

And Barbara had ripened into a buxom brunette, with a finely developed form, hair like the purple-black sheen of the falcon's wing, and eyes like his glance when flying toward his prey. A splendid creature was this wild sea-coast maiden; and Madame, who appreciated beauty in the physique, gazed upon her in unqualified admiration as she stood upon the bluff to welcome them.

"Walk up, Monsieur; walk up, Madame. I am so happy to see you," she said, smiling and clapping her hands with all her former childish glee. "Walk up."

"Yes, it is all very well for you to keep on repeating 'walk up,' and 'walk up,' when one had as well attempt to 'walk up' the side of a perpendicular wall," said the old man, ruefully; and with his right hand he planted his cane as a sort of grappling hook, and with his left arm dragged the weight of Madame up the toilsome, steep ascent.

"Give *me* your hand, madame," said Barbara, laughingly stooping and extending hers to the lady, who seized it and nearly pulled her good-humored assistant down before gaining the top of the ascent. But Barbara possessed a a firm foot and a strong hand, and safely hoisted her charge.

"Grand Ciel!" exclaimed Madame, panting after the performance of this feat.

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They went on to the house, ascended the rickety stairs of the portico, and entered the large, cheerful hall. Four spacious rooms, two on each side, opened into this hall. This story was the only habitable part of the house. Barbara turned the latch of the first door to the left, and admitted her guests into a large but scantily-furnished parlor, without carpet or curtains, with only a dozen black oak chairs, a black oak table, and an engraved portrait of Paul Jones over the mantle-piece. This was the most comfortable and best furnished room in the house. Barbara seated her guests, brought them refreshments, and excused herself, and went into the adjoining hall to resume her occupation —the packing of a last trunk for her eldest brother, John, now a fine boy of sixteen, who was going out in the Mercury to make his first voyage. While Barbara packed the trunk, the old man watched her through the open door, launching at her laughing head an occasional jest.

"Well, my pretty Barbara, so John is going to sea?"

"Going to see *what*, Monsieur?" mocked the merry maiden.

"Ah! n'importe! but tell me, pretty Barbara, is the handsome young mate going on this trip?"

This time the girl was putting forth so much strength to force an unmanageable package into the trunk, that it threw the blood to her face in torrents of crimson, and she remained silent. And Monsieur Henri did not press the question.

Monsieur and Madame stayed and dined with Barbara; and in the afternoon the old gentleman attended his sister-in-law to the Mercury, saw her comfortably ensconced in her cabin, took leave of her there, and returned to his barque. In going home, he touched at the Headland, and went on shore for a moment to ask Barbara a question alone.

"Now tell me, bright Barbara" he said, "is the handsome mate going this trip?"

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Well, he is, Monsieur. He is inseparable from my father—he is his right-hand man, as the saying is."

"I did not see him aboard ship."

"He is on the main, hurrying up some hogsheads of tobacco, that are to go on board."

"Ah! Well, when is it to be, my pretty Barbara?"

"What, Monsieur?"

"Ah! let us have no secrets between you and me, my girl!"

"Well, Monsieur, I do not mind telling you alone," said the young girl, blushing brightly, while she answered frankly—"When he returns from his present voyage, Monsieur, my father will give up the command of the Mercury to him."

"Who will then become his son-in-law."

Barbara blushed, smiled, and nodded assent.

"And your brother, John?"

"He makes his first voyage now; afterward he will be mate to Julius."

"Will he? I thought it was John's *sister* who was to be mate to Julius?" said the old man slyly.

Barbara crimsoned, then laughed aloud, and admitted:

"I wish it could be so! I do so *long* to go to sea; my heart has gone there often."

"After Julius?"

"Before I ever saw or heard of Julius," said the girl, in slight displeasure.

"Oh! I know it, I know it, my girl! You must pardon the jests of an old man who takes a father's interest in you Good-night, my dear; good-night," said Monsieur Henri cordially shaking her hand.

"Good-night, dear Monsieur Henri."

Monsieur De L'Ile turned to depart. The inquiries he had put to Barbara Brande were not the idle questions of gossip. He took, as he said, a father's interest in the for

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tunes of this motherless girl, and had a private plan of his own for forwarding the prosperity of herself and her betrothed. He re-entered his barque, and sailed home by starlight. And the next day, with the first tide, the Mercury weighed anchor, and set sail for Havre.

Madame, after a prosperous voyage of five weeks, arrived at Havre, and traveled post to Paris. She reached that capital a few weeks previous to the arrival of her son, Victoire, with whom she thus soon had the happiness of being reunited.

She accompanied him to England when he proceeded thither to claim his bride as has been shown.

And when he failed in this enterprise, she recommended him to file a petition for a hearing before the Spiritual Court of Arches, to place the affair in the hands of a competent attorney to manage during his absence, and then to embark for America, and take up his residence with his uncle, the pleasant old madman, who fancied himself King of the Isles; but who would nevertheless receive his nephew with open arms. Madame also resolved to accompany her son and re-establish herself on the Island, where she felt that with Victoire by her side, she should be perfectly safe.

Upon inquiring at St. Catherine's docks she found her old acquaintance, Captain Brande, with his clipper the Mercury, about to sail for the Chesapeake, and gladly availed herself of the opportunity afforded to secure a passage for herself and son.

They embarked the same night and set sail the next morning.

And from the hour of their embarkation, Monsieur Victoire's spirits had sunk, as I said, until they had reached the point of despair. A presentiment of approaching death overshadowed him. A necessity of putting in order his earthly affairs weighed upon him. And it was under the influence of this feeling that he pressed his friend Julius

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Luxmore to accept the guardianship of his young daughter, and executed a testament leaving her to his charge, which he placed in Mr. Luxmore's keeping

"If I survive, Luxmore," he said, "I shall find Estelle, inform her of the existence of her child, and through that child constrain her to my will. If I die, Luxmore, you are to take charge of Etoile, advise her mother of her existence, but make Estelle's eternal separation from Montressor the only condition of the restoration of her child."

"I promise to execute your will, and to do all else that you desire. Nevertheless, I must assure you that your talk of death is an absurdity that proves you to be a hypochondriac," said Julius Luxmore.

Victoire shook his head, and dropped into a mournful silence.

And three weeks after that conversation, the Mercury was wrecked as we have shown, and all on board were lost except Julius Luxmore, who being rescued by Lord Montressor, and carried on board the Queen Charlotte, and finding there no one who knew him, gave his name, for reasons of his own, as Julius Levering.

In the strong box that had been picked up from the wreck of the Mercury, he found the will of Victoire L'Orient, and carefully secured it.

When the Queen Charlotte had reached the port of Baltimore, and the mournful intelligence of the wreck of the Mercury went abroad to spread grief and terror over the land, it was also said that every soul on board perished, except one Mr. Levering, whom no one seemed to know, and who, in fact, had disappeared.

And oh! as the dreadful story of the loss of the Mercury, with all but one on board, spread over the land, how many homes were darkened, how many hearts made desolate. The awful intelligence, traveling slowly through cities, towns, and villages, at length reached Eastville, reached the

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Headland and Barbara Brande. And upon that home the news fell like a thunderbolt, smiting it to ruin! For all was gone!—ship and cargo and crew!—father, brother, and lover! All gone at a stroke! All lost, except this Mr. Levering whom no one knew, but whom Lord Montressor had risked his life to save!

CHAPTER XIV.

BARBARA BRANDE.

"Go when the hunter's hand hath wrung
From forest caves her shrieking young,
And calm the lonely lioness,
But sooth not, mock not my distress!"—*Byron.*

We left the beautiful Estelle a fugitive from love over the wide world.

We left Lord Montressor anxiously seeking some clue by which to trace her course.

We bade adieu to the "Island King" and "Princess," leaving them together in their insulated kingdom.

We parted company with Julius Levering at the moment that he disappeared from the deck of the ship.

And finally we abandoned the poor, wounded, young lioness, Barbara Brande, in the hour of her utmost need, when every earthly stay and support was stricken from her at one blow.

We return first to Barbara She was of a stronger, firmer, more resolute and courageous nature than any woman, or than most men. Yet when the blow fell—the blow that deprived her at once of father, brother, lover, living,—all in an instant, she dropped beneath it, sunk as it were smitten to the earth!

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I have seen a Titanic forest tree struck with lighting before my window—seen it suddenly by a shaft from Heaven, rived, branch, and trunk, and root, from sky to earth!

So fell the thunderbolt of fate upon her! riving, rending, scathing, brain and heart and frame! and dropped under it, prostrate.

But she was strong and could not die—she was a human soul and could not lie prostrate and immovable forever, as the thunder-stricken tree laid!

The energetic spirit soon struggled to free itself from the serpent coils of pain and death, and longed to hurl itself amid some violent, some tempestuous, terrible action, in which the sense of anguish might be lost.

She conquered the agony—she surmounted it as we do every thing in this world! Yes, she surmounted it; but the world was changed, or she was!

Life never seemed the same to her again. All seemed dull, flat, spiritless. She was weary of the careless round of days and nights; weary of the monotonous rising and setting of the sun; weary of the unmeaning, unsympathising faces of men and women; disgusted with the regular recurrence of three meals a day, disgusted with all the eaters and drinkers, workers and sleepers, buyers and sellers in this tedious, insufferable world!

In such a mood of mind, many men and women have gone mad; but Barbara Brande's brain was too strong and healthy to permit her to lose her consciousness of suffering in madness.

In such a mood many have committed suicide—but Barbara Brande, untutored child of the sea as she was, and driven to despair as she had been, possessed too deep a reverence for the laws of God and his holy gift of life, to cast that life away and rush unbidden into the awful presence of the Giver!

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So she struggled bravely to free her spirit from the writhing, binding, fettering serpents of anguish and despair!

Her heart panted to lose its dreadful sense of loss in action! Oh, action! action! action! Such action as that into which despairing man hurls himself, and forgets his despair; struggling, laborious, dangerous action! Strife, battle, war!—war with circumstance, with man, with the elements!

With such irresistible impulses, women have sometimes enlisted as soldiers—aye, and won laurels, too, in the fields of victory; but Barbara Brande, with all her strength, and fire, and courage, and her passionate desire to stun the maddening consciousness of anguish in some stormy conflict and career—could not have done any thing like this. Her maiden modesty would not have permitted her to change her woman's dress for that of man, any more than her native truthfulness would have allowed her to practice a deception in regard to her sex. And her free, wild, ungovernable spirit could no more have submitted to the control of camp discipline, than her merciful heart could have taken part in the bloodshed of the battle-field.

So, though the wounded, tortured, maddened young creature thought of this, she could not enter upon such a life.

A stricken lioness, with the arrow quivering in her flesh, lays not down in patient suffering, but runs roaring, through the desert, until the shaft falls from the wound, or she drops dead!

So Barbara! she longed to propel herself headlong into some stormy, stunning strife!

Meanwhile two boy brothers of eleven and twelve looked up in her face for comfort and support,—looked up to the brave and gentle sister, who was also the only mother they had ever known.

"Oh, sister, sister! do not stare so! You frighten us to

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death with your eyes!" they said, as they came to her where she sat, in the dreary, half-furnished old parlor, *her* chamber of desolation!"

They were kneeling each side of her, with their heads upon her lap. Her arms were around each boy, her face bent over them, and her wild black hair all unbound, and streaming around them. She might have seemed a widow with her orphans. But she was even a more desolate creature—this awfully bereaved maiden with her little brothers. For a widow has generally some knowledge of life and some experience to meet its exigencies; but what does a poor, wild girl, thunder-stricken, maddened, blinded, by such overwhelming calamity, know of battling the watch with fate?

Nothing!

There she sat—her arms around the boys' heads—her face bent over them, her dark hair streaming.

"Oh, sister, don't look so! Oh, sister, speak to us!"

"Oh, my boys, my boys! what shall sister say to you! What can sister do for you? Oh, lads, the best thing we could do would be to put to sea in a leaking boat and go down with the others!—only that the Lord forbids such!" she cried, wildly clasping them to her heart.

"Oh, no, sister! don't think of such a thing as that! We don't want to die at all," said Edwy, the younger boy.

The elder, Willful, said nothing, but gazed with unspeakable love in his sister's face.

"Oh, boys, boys! your sister will turn to a pillar of salt if she stays here!"

"Well, *don't* stay here, Barbara! get the insurance-money and buy a vessel, and let us lade it and make a voyage to Habana," said Willful, gazing earnestly into his sister's face.

For the first time Barbara lifted her lion-like head,

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shaking her black hair as a mane from her breast—her great, strong eyes kindled, her nostrils quivered, as those of a steed that scents the battle afar off—she drew in a deep breath and exclaimed, in a quick, low, resolute tone—

"That's it! I have found it! You are right, Willful, my brother! Our father's craft must be ours."

"You feel better now, sister?" said the gentle-spirited Edwy, putting his arm around her neck and kissing her cheek—"you feel better?"

"Yes!—thank God."

"And you won't any more talk about putting to sea in a leaking boat?"

"No—Heaven forbid!"

From this time Barbara's spirits rallied. She looked around upon her circumstances, prospects, and duties, and her facilities for meeting the future.

First, what were her duties?

Her brothers looked to her for support, comfort and guidance. She had always filled a mother's position toward them. She must also now occupy a father's place.

How should she properly discharge these obligations?

Her father's last will and testament, besides endowing her with half the small property, constituted her the whole executor of that will and the guardian of her brothers.

The property consisted of the wild, unproductive farm and half-ruined house on the headland—an unprofitable but an inalienable estate, that would just bring garden vegetables and grain enough for family use; there were three or four negroes who worked the garden, and sometimes, when the Skipper had been short of hands, worked the ship Besides this, there was the insurance-money of the ship and cargo that had also been assigned to Barbara.

Looking over, and mentally appraising her property, her peculiar temperament, talents and circumstances, Barbara's

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resolution was soon formed, and carried out. She determined to go to Baltimore, purchase a clipper, and lade it, take her negro sailors and her two brothers, and sail for the West Indies, to open a trade with her father's old correspondents.

Accordingly, leaving the house and her little brothers in the care of the negroes, Barbara took passage in the first passing vessel for Baltimore, where in a few days she arrived safely.

After the usual demur and delay, she succeeded in getting the whole of the insurance-money, and then she set out in search of a clipper. She was fortunate in having a choice of three, and went about the work of inspecting them with a perfectly composed and competent manner, and astonished the grizzled old skippers of the port, by pronouncing the first unseaworthy; the second, very little if any better; and by ordering certain very judicious alterations and repairs to be made upon the third, which she finally decided on purchasing.

"Who the deuce have we here? What the demon sort of a girl is this, who knows all parts of a ship as well as she does the chambers and cupboards in her mother's house, and disputes about the build and rigging of a craft with the oldest 'salt' among us? aye! and can work a ship, I have no doubt in the world, as well as the best mate we have!" said one grey old sea-captain to another.

"Well! she *is* an 'old salt,'" replied the other, "as *old* a *salt* as so *young* a *girl* can be! That is old Brande's daughter, he who was lost on the Mercury. I suppose she is about twenty-one or twenty-two years of age, and Brande used to take her to sea with him from the time she was five years old! So Barbara may have seen fifteen years of sea-service, for aught I know."

"But what is she going to do with the clipper she has purchased?"

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"Ah! Lord knows! Give one of her brothers the command of it, I suppose, if she has one grown up and capable of taking it."

While the old skippers took "the bearings," of her course, Barbara, quite undisturbed by the opinions and comments of others, completed her purchase, and left the wharf.

The same week, Barbara returned home to place affairs in order there before going to sea. She arranged the old house, and left it, together with the garden and the stock, in care of old Neptune and his wife, with whom also she left a small sum of money for their incidental expenses.

Having made all preparations, accompanied by her two brothers and attended by her negro sailors, young Neptune and Ignatius, two stalwart sons of the old couple left in care of the house, Barbara embarked in an up-bay packet for Baltimore.

Very profound was the astonishment of her old acquaintances, the skippers, when they discovered that Barbara herself would take command of her own vessel. Their surprise would have been greater still, perhaps, if they had known how thoroughly competent in all respects was this eagle-eyed, lion-hearted maiden for the task!

She was fitted for the position by nature, constitution, and disposition, for she was a girl of great personal strength, courage, and activity, with a profound passionate attraction toward a sea life.

She was prepared for it by education and habit; for in the dozen voyages she had made with her father, the old skipper had thoroughly instructed her in the theory and practice of the science of navigation, and the art of seamanship.

Finally, she was compelled to it by circumstances. She had not only to support her young brothers but to put them in a way of supporting themselves. Their hereditary attractions, like her own, were to the sea; and no life offered

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such facilities to her and to them, as the life of the merchant-service. Last and not least, her negro sailors, like their mistress and her brothers, loved the ocean, and knew how to do nothing else so well as to work a ship.

Thus being fitted for a sea life by nature; being prepared for it by education; and driven to it by circumstances, we cannot do better reader, can we? than permit her to be a sea-captain, if she wishes it—especially as our most vehement objections would be unavailing to stop her.

While superintending the lading of her vessel, she, with her brothers, boarded at a comparatively quiet house near the wharf. While at this house, one day she picked up from a parlor table a newspaper, and listlessly ran her eyes down the uninteresting sahara of its advertising columns, when her glance was arrested by the following "want:"

WANTED—TO PURCHASE OR LEASE FOR A TERM OF YEARS a moderate sized country seat in a secluded situation. A sea-coast location preferred. Address box 333, P. O., stating terms etc.

Does the reader happen to know how many fates daily, hourly, turn upon the mere chance-seeing and answering of newspaper advertisements?

Now, no sooner had Barbara Brande read this "want" than a possibility presented itself to her active mind, such as had never occurred to her previously.

"A country house in a secluded situation; a sea-coast location preferred." Why our old house on the Headland is the very place this advertiser wants—if it were only in repair! But perhaps this person, if he has capital to spare, would take it and put it in repair; for I shouldn't wonder, being the precise sort of house he wants, that he would be able to find just such another. Just precisely such houses to let, are not as plenty as muscle-shells. And if he will take it and repair it, and deduct the price of the repairs from the rent, why should I not lease it to him, rather than let the old place lie idle until it falls to pieces? As for me

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and my boys—our home henceforth will be the ship! Why, therefore, should I not get the rents for this old house, so as to lay an anchor to windward for the boys? It is true that there is poor old Nep and his wife, who need a home. But it will be easy to make a proviso in the lease securing them the use of the cabin they now occupy, and the little garden spot of ground around it," ruminated Barbara.

"I'll do it if I can." She shortly determined; and sitting down, penned a note, folded, and directed it to box 333 P. O. Then calling her brother Willful, she dispatched him with it to its destination.

The next morning she received an answer, written in a bold, business-like hand, requesting her to present herself at private parlor, number 3, house number 10 Blank-street, and signed *S. Copsewood.*

"This looks as if Mr. Copsewood wanted to take the house," said Barbara, who lost no time in obeying the summons.

When she reached number 10, which she found to be an elegant private boarding house, she inquired for room number 3, and was at once shown up into a superbly furnished private parlor, at the door of which she was received by a rosy-cheeked waiting maid, who civilly inquired her name and business, and having ascertained that she was the person whom they were expecting, ushered her immediately into the presence of the loveliest lady Barbara thought she had ever seen.

This beautiful, dark woman was clothed in deep mourning, which, however, could not disguise the exquisite proportions of her graceful form. Her complexion of the purest, palest olive, was contrasted with jet black, slender-arched eyebrows, long drooping, black eyelashes, that effectually vailed the large languishing dark eyes, and a rich redundance of silken black ringlets that overshadowed the whole face, and lent even a deeper tone to the deep melancholy of its expression.

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Barbara Brande was spell-bound, fascinated, not more by the perfect beauty, than by the profound sorrow impressed upon this most lovely countenance.

"This is a most beautiful *shadow*," thought Barbara; "but where in the world have I seen a ray of *sunshine* answering, feature by feature, to this exquisite shadow? Where have I seen it? My acquaintance is not so extensive but that I might soon recollect. Let me see! My conscience, yes, I recollect! It is my Star of the Sea! my Island Princess! My golden-haired Etoile! She it is who is the *morning* to this dark lady's *midnight*, the *sunshine* to her *shadow*."

While these thoughts passed rapidly through the mind of Barbara Brande, the maid-servant presented her to the lady, saying:

"Here, Madam, is the young woman who has come about leasing the house."

The lady lifted her languid lashes, and said, interrogatively—

"Miss Brande?"

"Yes, Madam," said Barbara, thinking that she had never heard such liquid music break from human lips before.

"Pray be seated, Miss Brande. Susan, draw that arm-chair forward."

Susan obeyed, and Barbara accepted the offered seat.

"I received a note this morning from Mr. S. Copsewood, appointing me to call here at this hour to open possible negotiations respecting a house I have to lease. I happen to have a drawing of the house executed by my brother Willful, if Mr. Copsewood would like to see it," said Barbara.

The lady looked at the speaker with serious attention and some perplexity, while Susan smiled merrily, displaying all her white teeth.

At last the lady said:

"You are under an error, Miss Brande. The note re-

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ceived by you was written by my attendant, Susan Copsewood. And I am the person who desires to lease a house."

"You, Madam?"

"Myself—Mrs. Estel," said the lady, placing the accent on the first syllable of her name. "You may show me the drawing, if you please, Miss Brande."

Barbara produced the drawing, and put it in the hands of Mrs. Estel.

"Will you please to describe the place to me, while I look at the sketch, Miss Brande?" said the lady.

Barbara complied, describing the situation of the house and the scenery of the Headland.

"From the picture and your description, I think the place will suit me. You say, however, that the house is much out of repair?"

"Very much, indeed Madam; it would take five weeks in time and labor, and five hundred dollars in money, to make it comfortable," replied Barbary, in whose rustic estimation this sum seemed a very large amount. "But I am willing, Madam, to give up the rent as long as necessary for the repairs of the house. And I think, also, that the house could be made ready for you sooner than you could find another to suit you so well."

"I think that is very likely. You have full power to transfer the property?"

"I am twenty-two years old, Madam, and I am the sole executor of my father's will, and the sole guardian of my brothers."

The lady, on hearing this, now, for the first time raised her eyes, and looked full in the face of the strange girl.

A tall, magnificently developed form, with no superfluous flesh to impede activity; a strong, handsome face, with flashing black eyes and bands of jet-black hair, and an expression of pain, suffered and conquered, lingering around

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it,—a dress and cape of grey serge, a bonnet of coarse straw, was the *tout ensemble* that met the lady's gaze.

"How is this Headland to be reached?" was the next question asked.

"By means of the packet-vessels trading along the coast of the Bay, Madam," answered Barbara.

"Very well. I will take a few days to reflect upon your proposition, Miss Brande, and let you know the result."

"I thank you, Madam. It is proper to inform you, however, that in a week hence I sail for the West Indies."

The lady here again lifts her lashes with a look of inquiry, to which Barbara replied—

"I have command of the 'Stormy Petrel,' Madam, and shall set sail for Habana in six days."

The lady looked in gentle amazement upon the girl.

"Excuse me," she said—"but could I possibly have understood you to say that *you* had command of a vessel?"

"Yes, Madam, you understand aright."

The lady was too high bred to suffer any exclamation of surprise or wonder to escape her; but she looked at Barbara with such deep interest that the girl hastened to say—

"You are doubtless surprised, Madam; but you would be less so, were you acquainted with the circumstances. I am a strong girl; I was brought up to the sea, and taught navigation and seamanship by my father, with whom I made many voyages. When he was lost in his own ship, the hapless Mercury, Madam, I was under the necessity of looking about for a support for my young brothers. None offered so readily as my father's calling—that of a merchantman. I understood no business so well as that. My negroes were all sailors. My little brothers were old enough to serve apprenticeship to the same business. Therefore I am what I am, Madam."

"Mrs. Estel had been regarding her with the deepest interest; when she ceased speaking the lady said—

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"Miss Brande, I think I may safely promise to give you, to-morrow, your answer respecting the lease of the house. I think also, that there is no doubt but that I shall take it."

"Then you have no further commands for me, Madam?"

"I thank you—no."

Barbara Brande arose, bowed, and withdrew toward the door, followed by the rosy maid. With her hand upon the knob, however, she paused—looked back and said—

"Pardon me, Madam, but there is a condition I should mention before this matter goes any further."

"Proceed, Miss Brande."

"It may be a mere trifle to yourself, my lady; but a very important matter to me and *them*. In a word, I have two tried and faithful old family servants, born on the estate, brought up there, and now in their old age, living in a small cabin with a garden which they cultivate; and I should wish——"

"I understand you, Miss Brande," gently interrupted Mrs. Estel—"In the event of my taking the lease, the old people shall not be disturbed. Is there any thing else, Miss Brande?"

"I thank you—no, Madam. The terms suit you, I think?"

"The terms suit me."

"Then there is nothing else. Good-day, Madam."

"Good-day, Miss Brande."

Barbara now left the room attended by the maid.

When Susan returned she closed the door, and approaching her mistress, said, earnestly and respectfully—

"Will your ladyship go down to that bleak, lonely place?"

"Oh, yes, Susan! Yes, Susan! I never could like the town even in happiness; and now, now it suffocates me! we with oppressed bosoms, need more room to breathe. I long for the boundless woods, and the measureless sea!

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that is the reason why I prefer a wild, uncultivated coast." Susan approached her mistress, and sitting down on the carpet by her side, half kneeling, half reclining, gazed upon her face with an expression of mute, appealing affection.

Mrs. Estel laid her hand benignantly upon the head of the faithful girl, and said—

"Besides, Susan, I am imprisoned here; you know I have not left this room, or seen a soul but yourself, since we came here. I dare not go out, lest in a seaport town like this I should be recognized."

"Does your ladyship suspect then——?"

"What, Susan?"

"*That he is here.*"

"My heart! my heart! whom do you mean?"

"Lord Montressor."

"No! no, Susan! Do not tell me that! He has not followed me here!" said the lady, whose pale, olive cheek seemed turned to marble.

"Susan, speak! say you were mistaken—you might have been mistaken!"

"Dear lady, are you so distressed that his lordship should prove the strength of his ——"

"Girl! girl! be careful of your words."

"I will, Madam,—the strength of his *esteem* and *respect* for you?"

"To what end should he prove it? Does it need proof? Oh! why should he follow me here, only to renew a struggle so bitter, so terrible, so agonizing!" thought the lady to herself, as she sat twisting and wringing her white fingers.

"Dear lady, take comfort. Consider that his lordship, indeed, has the law on his side. Pardon me, sweet mistress, for reminding you, that for all that has come and gone you are his wife, and he has at least a right to the

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hearing, that you have never given him; a right, in a word, to plead his cause with you, and——"

The hand of the lady sank softly but firmly upon the head of the recumbent girl, and with her face, that was pale before, now dark with the swelling up of a suffocating emotion, she whispered huskily—

"Susan, forbear—you know not what you say—he must be free and honored—he has a brilliant career before him—he must cut me off—I fly that he may do so—I would *die* to rid him of me!"

Susan looked up appalled at her lady's face, in its dark and terrible agony.

"Susan! never, while you live, renew this counsel. But, tell me now, are you *sure* you saw him?"

"Yes, perfectly sure, Madame."

"Where?"

"In St. John's church, yesterday afternoon."

"He did not see you?"

"No, Madam; I sat far back, in a dark corner. I wore a vail also; and you know that when a thick vail is down before our faces, close to our eyes, we can see through it even at a distance, while those far off cannot recognize our features. If it had not been for my dark corner and my vail, I think his lordship might have discovered me, for he was looking about a great deal."

"Was he looking well?"

"Oh! my lady, pardon me, how could he be looking well?"

The lady groaned, and covered her face with her hands. The attendant continued—

"No, my lady, he was not looking well! He was very thin and pale, worn and haggard, with a restlessness and anxiety on his countenance and in his manners, that it half broke my heart to behold. Oh, dearest lady, how can you bear to——"

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"SUSAN!" The word escaped like a sharp cry.

"Forgive me, lady, my feelings betray me into indiscretion, sometimes."

"I am fearful, indeed, my girl, that you are not safe,' said Mrs. Estel, gravely.

After this there was a pause for some moments, and then Mrs. Estel said—

"Was that the only occasion upon which you saw him here, Susan?"

"Yes, Madam; but I knew before that he was here."

"You knew it before, Susan, and never warned me!"

"You would not permit me to tell you of the shipwreck, lady."

"No, no! I cannot bear to hear of the shipwreck. There are wrecks of the heart and soul, God knows, that none upon the ocean equals! And—but we were speaking of *him;* and I do not see what the shipwreck you talk of has to do with him, since, thank Heaven, he was not wrecked."

"It has every thing to do with him, dear lady! You have confined yourself to this room ever since you arrived in the city, never once going out—never seeing any one here—never looking at a newspaper—never hearing any news, and not even permitting me to speak to you of a subject that is the universal talk of the city, yet of which you know nothing. And yet, dear lady, it has something to do with Lord Montressor, since his heroism upon that occasion is the subject of universal applause."

"Applause! truly, applause would seem the natural attendant of Lord Montressor's movements; but I wait to hear what special act of his lordship called forth the applause upon this occasion."

"To explain it, my lady, I should be obliged to speak in detail of that fatal shipwreck, of which you have refused to hear."

"Proceed Susan, proceed and have done with it, my

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girl; for I perceive that neither you nor I will have any peace until I have consented to listen to all the horrors you long to relate to me. Only be brief, then, and spare yourself and me as much as possible," said the lady, and resting her elbow on the arm of the chair, and leaning her forehead upon the palm of her hand, she composed herself into a listening mood.

CHAPTER XV.

THE GIRL-CAPTAIN.

"Let them be sea-captains, if they will."
Margaret Fuller on Woman's Rights

SUSAN commenced and related just so much of the particulars of the shipwreck as had reached her through the public press, and through the conversation of those persons with whom she had been thrown in company One important fact, however, she reserved for a separate recital—that fact was the discovery and burial of the drowned body of Victoire L'Orient.

Lady Montressor listened, with her head bowed upon her hand, with her long, black ringlets falling vail-like around her beautiful pale face, and with her full, dark eyes lowered mournfully to the ground. But that consuming grief had long ago dried up the fountain of her tears, they must have fallen thick and fast over the sad recital. As it was, her lovely eyes were tearless, and her deep melodious voice calm, as she commented on what she heard.

"It was indeed a fearful tragedy; but life is full of tragedies that the eyes of the world see not, or the mind of the world ignores—heart-tragedies, soul-tragedies—storms in

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which not ships and cargoes, but hopes and aspirations are engulfed forever."

"But Lord Montressor, dear lady! surely his heroism—"

"Was a portion of himself, and does not in the least surprise me, my girl."

"Will nothing give her pleasure? not even her lover's heroism?" inquired Susan of herself, as she watched the colorless, motionless face of her mistress.

"Do not confine yourself to this room with me, my girl. Get your bonnet and take a walk—only be discreet, keep to the back streets, and the shady side, and do not raise your vail. Go, Susan," said the lady, considerate of her attendant's welfare.

"Thank you, dear madam, but I have no desire to do so. Besides, I have not told you all."

"I think you have, my child: pray do not recur to the subject, my Susan," said the lady, wearily.

"But, mistress, dear, this event that I have to tell you, so nearly, so vitally, concerns yourself."

The lady mournfully, incredulously, shook her head.

"Let me tell you, madam: indeed, I have it upon my conscience to tell you. I should have told you before, but I was afraid to divulge it suddenly, lest I should do you an injury; and every time I approached the subject gradually, you repelled me and repelled me. Oh, it was as if a drowning lady had waived off, and waived off the life-boat that was coming to save her. And besides there are some names that you will never endure to hear uttered in your presence."

"Susan, memory is a rack; and I—seek forgetfulness—as if that were possible, great Heaven!"

"Mistress, may I speak?"

"Go on."

"Monsieur Victoire L'Orient——"

"Hold!" cried Lady Montressor, starting and then sink

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ing back in the corner of her chair, collapsed, cowering, shuddering, as if that name had been a musket-shot sent through her bosom.

"Is no more," persisted Susan, following up the shrinking form of her mistress, and speaking close to her ear—"is no more, do you hear, lady? is dead, drowned, buried in the sea."

Lady Montressor lifted a pale, wild, incredulous face to the speaker.

"Yes, dead, drowned, buried in the sea," repeated the girl, emphatically.

Lady Montressor changed neither attitude nor expression, but remained gazing almost fiercely upon the speaker.

"In a word, madam, he was lost on the Mercury."

"Why, so he was on the 'Duke of Anjou,' said the lady, in a strange, ironical tone.

"I know; but this time, lady, he was drowned."

"So he was before. He does not mind it, Susan: it does not affect him in the least," said Estelle, incredulously.

"Madam, drowning certainly disagreed with him this time."

"I think it will be found that he is well and hearty, Susan."

"Oh, I see you don't believe it. But there is a full account of the whole affair in the Baltimore American."

"Why, so there was of the other affair in the London Times—a reliable paper, Susan: yet you know the result."

"Oh, my lady, but it is true now, beyond all doubt, that the wretched man is dead. People don't get over such *attacks* twice—the second time it is sure to be fatal—it was so in his case. His body was picked up by the Queen Charlotte. Lord Montressor and Mr. Levering, the man whom Lord Montressor saved, swore to the identity, which was also further proved, if further proof had been necessary, by the papers found on his person, and by the marks on his

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clothes. His identity was proved and recorded, and he received Christian burial, in the presence of the whole ship's crew. Lord Montressor and Mr. Levering, among the others, saw his body committed to the deep."

While Susan spoke thus earnestly—solemnly—the ironical, insane incredulity of the listener was lost in conviction and awe. The face of the beautiful Estelle underwent a great and fearful change. She, so pale before, grew still paler, grew livid, while a blue circle darkened around her eyes; she seemed on the verge of swooning, but rallied her powers, and clinging to the arm of her chair for support, inquired in a husky, almost sepulchral voice:

"*Is this true?*"

"True as Gospel, dear lady! your mortal foe is dead."

"Then may the Lord have mercy on his soul! for he greatly needed mercy," said Lady Montressor, solemnly.

There was a pause of some half hour, during which Lady Montressor covered her face, and remained in deep thought and prayer, and then the lady spoke:

"Susan, you may take the walk I advised, and while you are out go down to the Ocean House, and see Miss Brande, and let her know that I have fully decided on taking the lease of the Headland, and that if she will have the documents drawn up to-day, I will immediately conclude the business."

Susan looked disappointed and distressed, and did not move to obey.

"Did you hear my order, Susan?"

"Yes, madam, I heard: pardon me; but, dearest lady, dearest mistress, will not what I have just told you affect your resolution?"

"In what respect?"

"In respect of your retiring from the world to that lonely sea-coast."

"Why should it?"

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"Dearest lady, pardon me! pardon one who loves you more than her own life, for speaking upon this subject; but remember now that you are free forever from all possibility of annoyance from that haunting man; remember now that happiness is within your grasp."

"Susan, forbear!"

"Mistress, hear me! have mercy on yourself, and, above all, on *him*. Do not go to that lone, sea-coast house; stay here and wait for him; he has followed you across the sea, he will find you in a few days; see him, lady; listen to him; and then do as you will. Not the most ascetic monk, or nun, or the most puritanical pietist of any persuasion could venture to criticise your course, it has been, through all this trying time, so blameless. Nor could saint nor angel censure you now for receiving him. See him, hear him, lady! Oh, would to Heaven there were some wiser one than I am here to talk to you—some great learned divine in whom you would have confidence. I, alas! I am unlearned in theology, and my simple wisdom of the heart may be despised," said Susan, almost weeping.

"You know that is not so, my child. I would trust the 'simple wisdom' of your true heart as soon—aye, sooner than the opinion of the Archbishop of York. Is not your relation to me more nearly that of friend than of an attendant, Susan? Are you not in my confidence? Do I not often take counsel with you, child?"

"Yes, dear lady, but—if you would only this once take the *benefit* of my counsel," replied the girl with a latent dash of humor that respect for her unhappy mistress kept subdued.

"Susan, my good and loving child," began the lady in a mournful voice, "I will tell you, then, why I may not see Lord Montressor. True, the haunter of my days is dead—but *not* dead is the dreadful memory that I had been his—'victim'—as good Mr. Oldfield mercifully termed it. True, also, that the law and the church not only acquitted,

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but vindicated me—not only pronounced me not guilty but positively INNOCENT; but that does not free me from the clinging degradation of having been tried upon a criminal charge! My peace is ruined, my fame blighted, my hopes blasted—I am a human wreck, a walking shadow, a living death—unfit to match with the vital glory of Charles Montressor's future. He is a man of brilliant genius. He is distinguished, and will be celebrated. Every successful man has hosts of bitter, carping, envious foes—vigilant, quick, cruel, in seizing, denouncing, and exposing any possible flaw in his life, character, or circumstances. Shall *such* have power to say of Lord Montressor—'He married the "victim" of a French conspirator'—'His wife was once a prisoner before Exeter Assizes.' No, no! Oh, no! Merciful Heaven, no!"

"But, lady! sweet mistress! hear your poor Susan, yet a little while longer. Suppose you let his lordship have a voice in deciding this matter, which concerns his happiness quite as much as it does yours. Suppose you let him say to you what we know he says to himself—'I prize this precious hand of yours more highly than all that mankind could possibly lavish upon me. I should consider the loss of it a heavier calamity than the loss of the favor of the whole world'—what then?"

"Susan! Susan! sooner than join my dishonored life to his most honored one, I would fly to the most savage extremities of the earth—yes! but for the grace of God, sooner than that, I would leave the earth itself!" she exclaimed with passionate earnestness.

"Lady, lady, I will say no more," said Susan, beginning to weep—a sure resort with her when there was nothing else to be done.

Lady Montressor dropped her brow upon her hand again, and fell into deep thought for a few minutes, at the end of which she lifted her head and said—

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"Susan, my child, you followed a generous but too hasty impulse in leaving home, and friends, and country, to share the fortunes of a blighted woman like myself. I was very wrong to permit you to do it. I should have seen this at the time, but that the very tumult and passion of my flight swamped every other thought. But it is not yet too late to repair the injury that has been done you."

"My lady! good Heaven! what do you mean?" exclaimed Susan, clasping her hands in deprecation of what she felt was coming next.

"Susan, I can send you back to England."

"I have offended you! Oh, I have offended you! Forgive me, my lady! my dear, dearest lady!" cried Susan, wringing her hands.

"No, you have not, my girl! my poor girl. How could you offend me, Susan? Never did I value you more highly than at this moment, when I talk of sending you from me, and it is for the very reason that I esteem you so much, I wish to discharge you. I think of your future, Susan. If you leave me and return to England, you will probably lead a cheerful, happy life, and in good time marry happily; while, if you accompany me to my sad retreat, what is before you but a dreary, solitary life, and an age of old-maidenhood?"

"My lady, I haven't seen such joy among the married as ever to envy them, the dear knows! and, besides, I have always heard it said that a woman's life is in her affections, and I believe it. Now your poor Susan's affections centre upon you. It would break her heart to leave you. In a word, dear lady, if you were to order her to depart, she would for the first time in her life, disobey you, and follow you until you gave her house-room or—in charge of the police!" said Susan, falling into that lurking humor, that under happier circumstances would have developed into wit. "Marry-come-up! I mean Miserabili! Am I not a

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sort of protege of your ladyship? Didn't you take me, a poor little bare-footed girl, out of a hillside hovel, and didn't you dress me neatly and put me into your own Park school? and didn't you encourage me week by week, and month by month, and year by year, to learn? And didn't you take me thence into your own service, and still stimulate me to improve my mind, and didn't yon lend me books, and even direct my reading? And didn't you month by month, and year by year, absorb more and more of my life into your own, until now I have no life without you? And do you now talk of casting me off?——Forgive me, dear lady, I have spoken freely, I fear, also impertinently, but I have spoken *truly*. I cannot leave you."

Lady Montressor turned away her head to conceal the emotion that disturbed her countenance, and after a little while she said—

"Well! well! we will talk of this another time, Susan! Meanwhile, hurry down to the Ocean House, and bring that young woman to me; the facts that you have imparted make it necessary to be expeditious."

With a deep sigh Susan arose, put on her straw bonnet with the thick green vail, drew a black silk scarf closely around her sloping shoulders, and went quietly out upon her errand.

In two hours she returned, accompanied by Barbara Brande, young Willful, and a lawyer, with the deed of lease.

Lady Montressor sat in her closely curtained parlor, near a corner table, with her elbow on its top, and her head averted from what little light there was, and resting upon her hand, her long black ringlets falling around, and throwing into deeper shadow the features of her beautiful face. And so she received the party.

Barbara Brande first approached, and saluting her respectfully, said that she had brought the lawyer with the lease and her elder brother as a witness

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Lady Montressor slightly lifted her eyelids, acknowledged the presence of these others with a bow, and addressing Barbara, said—

"Let your attorney read the documents, Miss Brande—he need not come nearer, I can hear his voice from where he stands. Susan, place a chair for the gentleman—Miss Brande, sit near him, if you please."

Barbara retreated, and instructed the lawyer to begin.

The documents were read and approved.

Then Barbara brought the articles and laid them upon the table before the lady for her signature.

Susan dipped a pen in ink and handed it to her mistress who affixed her name to both documents, *Le Estel.* Then the pen was passed to Barbara, who signed hers, and next to Susan Copsewood, who attached her firm autograph as first witness, and finally to young Willful Brande, who wrote his name as second witness. The articles were then delivered, Lady Montressor receiving one copy and Barbara Brande the other. The payment for the first year was then tendered in advance, but Barbara preferred that the funds should be devoted to the repairs of the house, and that matter being amicably arranged, the business was completed. The lawyer arose to take his leave, and was permitted to do so; but when Barbara and her brother would have departed, Lady Montressor made a sign desiring them to remain for a few moments.

Barbara returned and took the chair that had been placed for her accommodation by Susan.

Willful seated himself modestly at some distance.

"You were a sufferer by the wreck of the unfortunate Mercury?" said Lady Montressor, in a voice of deep commiseration.

"Madam, she was my father's vessel; when she went down I lost—my father, my brother, and my betrothed,—all, all except these two boys, for whom I live."

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"Brave girl, that you live for them!"

"Ah, Madam, you know then, that sometimes, in this world of ours, it requires more courage to live than to die."

Lady Montressor essayed to speak, but only bowed; and after a short pause, slightly changed the subject, by saying:

"But, Miss Brande, is not the career you have chosen a strange, trying life for a woman—especially a young and handsome woman?"

"Not when her name is Barbara Brande—not when she has been brought up on the sea and loves it—not when she is strong and courageous—not when fate, by striking her one stunning blow, has made her insensible to personal danger—not when a storm of grief has rendered her, by the strength of despair, fit to cope with all other storms—not when she has two brothers to establish in life, who, like all of their race, herself included, perhaps, are fit for nothing but the sea," said Barbara, earnestly.

"Pray, forgive my interference; it is the interest with which you have inspired me, Miss Brande, that urges me to speak; but would it not be better to place your brothers, since they must learn navigation and seamanship, with some merchant captain in whom you have confidence, and then seek, for yourself, some more feminine occupation or interest on shore?"

"Madam, *no*, I cannot leave my boys, nor let them leave me—particularly for the sea. Besides, my life is not the life of other women: calamities like mine can never be forgotten."

"Do not say so; you are young yet; at your age, *all* misfortunes may be outlived and forgotten—*except guilt or disgrace*," added the lady, in a thrilling, passionate, solemn voice.

"Neither the one nor the other has ever approached our poor household, honored Madam; and never shall, while Barbara Brande holds authority over it."

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"You speak with great assurance, young woman. Know that it is not *always* in human power to ward of those heaviest of human ills."

"I speak, dear Madam, with a faith in the Divine protection, as far from presumption, on the one hand, as it is from doubt, on the other. The Lord prospers faithful endeavor. It is to ward off temptation from them, that I choose to watch over my brothers. There is no human guardian like an elder sister, excepting, only, a mother."

"A mother," repeated Lady Montressor, sadly and thoughtfully, recurring, perhaps, to the fine London belle, who had shuffled off her maternal cares and responsibilities upon a worthless French nurse and an unprincipled French governess; and whose dereliction from duty had been the origin of all her daughter's calamities.

"I lost *mine* at a very early age, yet, ever since, have I been the mother of my young brothers; and if ever I grow impatient of their boyish ways, I have only to remember they are my dear mother's orphan children, to bear with them cheerfully. The calling that I have chosen, for their sakes as well as my own, is not less befitting a woman than that of the stage, the counter, the bar, or any of the hundred ways by which poor women earn their bread, or support their families. That it requires more courage and firmness, surely does not render it more unfit for woman: no woman will say that."

"No, no; it surely does not."

"I would rather," said Barbara, "work a ship through the fiercest tempest that ever a ship *survived*, than stand before the footlights of a stage, face a mixed audience, and act out a part in a play, during a whole evening—as I find even cultivated women sometimes do in this city of yours. Why, I hear the old sea-captains, down at the Ocean House, criticising their personal points. My chosen life may be

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unfeminine, but it will not expose me to indignities," said Barbara.

"I have no more to say. We will rest the argument," said Lady Montressor.

Barbara arose to take leave.

"Stay, Miss Brande, if you please. I did not call you back for a fruitless talk. I understood you to say that your vessel would be your future home?"

"Yes, Madam."

"Will it be your *only* one? Forgive the question, and answer it frankly as it is asked."

"It will."

"Then, Miss Brande, permit me—I know how deep the attachment one feels to her native home; I know how strong yours must be to the Headland. Myself and maid will take up but little room in that large house; therefore, when you return from your voyage, come there as heretofore; your two old servants will still be there to serve you; come with your brothers, and make it your home as before."

"Madam, you are very good. Your most generous offer has taken me by surprise; and well as I should like to accept it, I am not sure that it would be right for us to profit by your extraordinary kindness," said Barbara, with emotion.

"I do beseech you, my dear girl, not to hesitate, not to entertain the least scruple upon this subject. I assure you that your return to the Headland will be a personal satisfaction"

"Again I thank you from the depths of my heart, lady; but I cannot gain my own consent at once to take advantage of your kind offer. It would seem too selfish and grasping on my part."

"Take time, then, my dear girl; but remember this the while, that at *all* times the sight of your sail near the Headland, or your face within its doors, can bring nothing but pleasure to its lessee"

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"I thank you earnestly, dear lady; and I promise you that whenever I return from a voyage, whether I spend much time with you or not, my sail shall be seen off the Headland, and my face within your doors," said Barbara, gratefully, and once more she had made a move to go.

"Stay yet a moment. I wish to depart immediately for that house."

"Before it is repaired, Madam?"

"Yes—before it is repaired. If it were barely habitable for you and your brothers, it is also habitable for me; and I can superintend the repairs on the spot. I suppose workmen can be found in the neighborhood?"

"There is *no* neighborhood, dear lady; but workmen can be had from the village of Eastville."

"Very well—that will answer my purpose. Now tell me, Miss Brande, do you know of any vessel about to sail that could take us there?"

"The Sea Mew will sail to-morrow, with the first tide, for Havana. They have accommodations for passengers, but no passengers, I think. She is a good ship. If you were ready to sail in her, Captain Brewster could put you on shore at the Headland."

"I will go, if I can get a berth. Miss Brande, could you do me the great favor of letting your brother ascertain whether I can get one?"

"I have not the least doubt that you can secure a berth; but I will assure myself as to the fact from Captain Brewster himself, who boards at the Ocean House; and I will send Willful to let you know."

"I thank you very much."

"There is one thing I should tell you—two things, indeed: first, it is necessary that you should take a supply of provisions down with you, as there is no store nearer to the Headland than Eastville—secondly, that if you go at all, you should go on board *to-night*."

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"I thank you for your careful instructions, Miss Brande, and shall endeavor to follow them."

"I will now take leave of you, lady, as no time should be lost in seeing Captain Brewster and securing a berth. Good-bye, Madam."

"Good-bye, for the present. If I go, I shall see you again this evening; if I do not go, I shall see you frequently during our stay."

"And if it should so happen that you should not obtain a passage in the Sea Mew, Madam, the Petrel will sail in a week, and I should be very glad to have you, and could make you passably comfortable in my cabin."

"I thank you, Miss Brande; and indeed, but for the great haste I am in, I should much prefer to go with you. By the way, shall you stop at the Headland on your way down the Bay?"

"In any case, *yes*, Madam, I shall be obliged to do so."

"Then if I am there in advance of you, I shall be happy to receive you."

"I thank you, Madam—now, indeed, I must haster away. Good-day, Madam."

"Good-day, Miss Brande."

And declining Susan's attendance, Barbara and her brother retired.

"Now, Susan, we must have all things in readiness, in case, as I expect, we shall be able to obtain a passage on the Sea Mew. Pack up my trunks at once, girl, and afterward we can attend to those out-door matters."

Susan obeyed, and the afternoon was so well spent in preparation, that when at sunset Willful Brande presented himself with the information that the lady and her attendant could have a berth in the Sea Mew, coupled with a request that they would come on board that night, because the vessel was to sail with the first tide in the morning, he found them in readiness to depart.

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Willful Brande, by his sister's directions, offered his services to assist, called a carriage, helped the travelers into it, and after seeing them off, remained behind to load and bring the dray with their baggage.

Barbara met her new friend on the wharf, and accompanied her on board the Sea Mew.

They found the skipper, a bluff, hearty, gallant old sailor, waiting on the deck. He received his lady passenger with studied politeness, and handed her down into a comfortable cabin. And Barbara having seen the lady and her attendant fairly installed, took leave of them with the promise to stop at the Headland on her way down the Bay. In another hour, Willful Brande arrived with the dray containing the luggage, which was conveyed on board and stowed away.

And the next morning, at sunrise, the Sea Mew, having on board Lady Montressor and her maid, sailed for Havana.

The wind was fresh and fair, the weather fine, the water scenery grand, the whole circumstances animating, as holding out the prospect of a quick and pleasant voyage.

The lady and her attendant were accommodated with a state-room in the captain's cabin; that state-room had, through the care of Barbara, been neatly arranged—the berths covered with white counterpanes, and the window hung with a white muslin curtain. The cabin, through the courtesy of Captain Brewster, was given up almost exclusively to the use of his passengers.

But the sad Estelle passed the most of her time, both by day and by night, in sitting by the window of her state room, looking out upon the heaving sea.

It was on the ninth day of their passage down the Bay, and just at sunset, that Captain Brewster came into the cabin and informed the lady that they were approaching Brande's Headland.

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Estelle put on her bonnet and mantle, and followed by Susan, went up on deck, and looked out for her future home.

And there, a mile to the right, before them loomed the dark and dreary Headland, crowned with its ancient trees and half-ruined house.

Their baggage was already in the boat that was waiting to take them to the shore.

The captain assisted the lady and her maid to descend, and followed them into it, the oarsmen plied their oars, and in twenty minutes they reached the shore.

The captain handed his passengers to the beach, ordered the baggage taken out, and finally came up to the lady, expressed his regret at her departure, bade her adieu, and re-entered his boat which was rowed rapidly back to the ship.

And, Estelle, and her maid, were left standing alone in the twilight on the beach.

CHAPTER XVI.

PURSUIT.

"Oh! thou lost
And ever gentle lady—whose most fearful
Fate darkens earth and Heaven—where thou now art
I know not—but if thou now saw'st what I am,
I think thou would'st relent."—*Byron.*

The same evening Lord Montressor sat alone in his private apartment in the City Hotel. He looked pale and worn. A month had passed since his arrival in Baltimore, and notwithstanding his utmost endeavors, he had discov-

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ered no clue to his lost bride. He had come to the conclusion that she had left the city, and this evening he had formed the resolution, to leave the next morning for New York.

While thus he sat in moody silence, neglecting the evening paper that lay upon the table beside him, the door opened, and Gridley, his lordship's valet, presented himself.

Gridley was a grave, respectable-looking, middle-aged man, rather bald-headed and stout, clothed in black, and having quite the air of a high-church clergyman.

"Well, Gridley?"

"Well, my lord! I have most important information for your lordship," said his lordship's gentleman, pompously.

"Speak! what is it? Any thing in regard to your lady?" exclaimed Lord Montressor, rising anxiously.

"Yes, my lord! If ever I saw Lady Montressor in my life, I saw her ladyship come out of a house and enter a carriage to-night."

"At what hour? Where? Speak, man, in the name of Heaven!"

"From number ten ——— street."

"You are sure?"

"As the carriage drove off and the people who had opened the house door for her ladyship, went in and shut it, I ran up the steps and took the number."

"And then?"

"I ran down again as fast as I could and went after the carriage at the height of my speed. But though I walked so fast, the carriage which was driven very rapidly, distanced me, and rolled out of my sight."

"In what direction?"

"Toward the wharves, my lord."

"At what hour was this?"

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"About half-past eight, your lordship."

"You are *sure* the house from which she went was — —"

"Number ten ——— street, my lord, assuredly."

"Go call a cab."

The valet bowed and at once withdrew to obey.

Lord Montressor exchanged his dressing-gown for a close-bodied coat, took his hat and gloves, and in three minutes—by the time that Mr. Gridley put his head into the door to announce the cab,—he was ready to enter it.

He took out his watch.

"It is now half-past ten;—a late hour to make a call—but under present circumstances, I cannot afford to be fastidious. I shall ascertain if she lives in that house, and if not, *where* she lives," thought his lordship, as he took his seat in the carriage.

"Where shall I go, sir?" asked the cabman.

"Number ten —— street," said Lord Montressor.

A drive of half an hour brought them to the house. Lord Montressor alighted and looked at his watch; it was now eleven o'clock. He looked at the house; every window was darkened, every room silent, every inmate apparently asleep. He was very much disappointed. He had hoped to have reached the house some fifteen minutes earlier, and that some fortunate chance, such as an evening-party, an absent inmate, a late guest, or any among the thousand and one daily events, that happen to keep a family up at night, might have occurred this evening.

He was, as I said, very much disappointed.

He could almost have found it in his heart to call up the household to put to them the questions upon which he felt as if his fate depended. But this he knew, however desirable, was totally inadmissible. Ah! had he known the vital importance of these passing previous hours, he would have roused the family!

As it was, he said to himself—that he was weakly and

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culpably impatient—that a few hours could make no difference—that the morning was altogether the more proper time for making his meditated call and inquiry; and so determining, he re-entered the cab, and gave the order—

"Back to the hotel."

At ten o'clock the next morning, Lord Montressor entered a hack, and drove to the house in —— street. Without waiting for the hackman's ring to be answered, he alighted and went up the steps, and reached the portico just as a man-servant opened the door.

"Is Lady Montressor in?" was the diplomatic question of his Lordship.

"Lady Montressor does not live here, sir," answered the negro.

"Can you tell me where she *does* live?"

"I cannot, sir."

"Send" —— (Lord Montressor glanced up at the name on the door-plate,)—"Mrs. Brownloe here?"

"Yes, sir; walk in, and take a seat, sir; what name shall I take up, sir?"

"Say a gentleman."

"Yes, sir."

The man disappeared, leaving Lord Montressor seated in the drawing-room. And presently, the mistress of the house entered. She was a tall, stout, middle-aged woman, soberly attired in grey.

"Mrs. Brownloe, I infer?" said Lord Montressor, rising, and setting a chair for the lady.

"Yes, sir."

"Lord Montressor, Madam," said his lordship, announcing himself.

"Ah!—resume your seat, my lord. You sent for me?"

"Yes, Madam. I called, if you please, to make inquiry of a lady who left your house in a carriage, last evening, at half-past eight o'clock"

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"Oh! you mean Mrs. Estel?"

"Estelle! Estelle!" exclaimed Lord Montressor to himself—then aloud—"Yes, Madam; I speak of Mrs. Estel."

"Oh! she left us, as you said, yesterday evening."

"I should be very grateful to be informed whither she went, Madam?"

"Oh! I don't know! I haven't the least idea in the world. I think she left the city, however."

"Perhaps some member of your family may be better informed."

"Oh, no! I know they are not; because I had some curiosity to know where the lady went, and I made inquiries; no one could satisfy me—all they knew was the direction that the maid gave the hackman, and that the boy who had charge of the luggage afterward gave the drayman."

"And that was ——?"

"Light street wharf, sir."

"And that is all the intelligence you can give me?"

"All, sir; I am sorry it is so meagre; you are interested in the lady?"

"Yes, Madam. I thank you very sincerely for the information you have given me. Good-morning, Madam," said his lordship, not feeling disposed to be questioned in his turn, and rising to take leave.

"To Light street wharf," was the next order given to the hackman, as he re-entered the carriage.

And to Light street wharf he was driven.

On arriving at the spot, he alighted, and walked about among watermen, porters, sailors, laborers, and all the miscellaneous crowd of the docks, and, addressing an old skipper, he inquired what vessel left that wharf since eight the preceding evening.

"The only ship as has left the port at all, capting, is the Sea Mew, Captain Brewster, as sailed from this wharf at

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sunrise this morning, bound for Havanna," replied she accurate old sailor.

"Had she passengers?"

"More'n I can tell you, capting."

Leaving Mr. Gridley to mingle among the sailors at the wharf, and find out whether the Sea Mew had carried passengers, and whether those passengers were females, Lord Montressor once more re-entered his carriage and drove back to the hotel to await the result.

It was late in the afternoon when Gridley presented himself before his master.

"Well, Gridley?" said his lordship, anxiously.

"Well, my lord, I have ascertained that two females, answering to the description of Lady Montressor and her attendant, at nine o'clock last evening embarked on board the Sea Mew, bound for the West Indies."

"Ah! then I have her again; but it is certain that the lady was bound for the West Indies."

"Yes, my lord, certainly," replied the valet, falling into a very natural mistake.

"Was the information you obtained to be relied upon?"

"Without doubt, my lord, since it was from the hackman that took her ladyship from —— street to the ship, and from the drayman who conveyed her ladyship's baggage to the wharf, and from the porters who assisted in its transportation to the vessel—all of whom I hunted down and questioned, my lord."

"You have done your duty well, and I thank you, Gridley. Did you, by the way, happen to hear of any other vessel soon to sail for the West Indies?"

"No, my lord."

"Hand me the evening paper."

Gridley gave his master the "News."

Lord Montressor turned to the Marine Intelligence, and ran his eye down the list, muttering:

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"For Liverpool, um—For Havre, um—um—For New Orleans, um—um—um—For Havanna—here we have it! For Havanna, the Petrel, Brande master, to sail on the first of October. This is the twenty-fifth of September. Gridley, we sail for Havanna in a week—be ready."

"Yes, my lord."

CHAPTER XVII.

CAPTAIN BARBARA'S FIRST VOYAGE.

"How gloriously her gallant course she goes!
Her white wings flying—never from her foes;
She walks the waters like a thing of life,
And seems to dare the elements to strife.
Who would not brave the ocean storm, the wreck,
To move the monarch of her bounding deck!"—*Byron.*

EARLY the next morning, Lord Montressor went down to the wharf to inquire for the Petrel.

A trim, tight-looking little clipper, standing a cable's length down the river, was pointed out to him.

He called a boat, got into it, and directed to be rowed to the Petrel.

On arriving alongside the vessel, Lord Montressor found himself in the midst of a busy scene. Many other boats, heavily laden, were around the clipper, the crew of which, seeming to consist of four negroes, were engaged in taking in freight.

Lord Montressor directed his boat to be pulled up to the starboard gangway, and forthwith went on board, where, besides the four black sailors, who were engaged in hauling up heavy bales from the boats on the larboard, he found two manly boys of about ten and twelve standing on the deck.

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"Can you direct me to the Captain?" asked Lord Montressor.

The darkies suspended their labors for an instant to look at each other and grin.

"The Captain, my good fellows—the Captain—where is he?" again asked Lord Montressor, thinking they had not understood the first question.

"The gentleman asks for the Captin! My eyes, Sam! I reckon he's bound for Point No-Point," said one of the men; and all, negro-like, slackened their ropes and left off work, to gaze, grin, or gossip, as opportunity might offer.

But before Lord Montressor had time to reiterate his question, he was startled by a clear, ringing, sonorous voice, shouting:

"Ahoy there! What are you about men! look alive! look alive! bear a hand! bear a hand! so——!"

The men laid themselves with a good-will to their ropes, and the heavy bales and boxes soon swung between the boats below and the bulwarks above.

Lord Montressor turned to ascertain whence the cheery voice came; and he saw, standing upon the deck, with a small speaking-trumpet in her white hand, a tall, handsome young woman, with a finely developed form, broadly-expanded chest, frank, resolute countenance, shining black hair, and flashing black eyes. Her dress and hood of coarse grey serge could not disguise her singular beauty.

"So—— That's it! Haul hearty! cheerly boys!—cheerly!—so——!" called the same animating voice, as the men hoisted in the freight.

Then she lowered the little speaking-trumpet, and advanced to receive Lord Montressor, who was going toward her.

"Some sister, or daughter, or perhaps wife of the skipper, doing duty in his absence. Some shore-mate acting as ship-mate—a very piquante position, upon my word!" thought

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Lord Montressor, as he paused before the young Amazon, and lifted his hat.

"How do you do, sir? Have you any business with me?" asked Barbara. The tone was frank, short, decided, almost abrupt.

"I have business with the skipper, if you will be so kind as to direct me where to find him, young lady."

"Ah! you wish to see Brande, Master?"

"Yes, Madam."

"Here he is, then," said Barbara, laying her hand proudly and fondly on the head of the elder boy, who stood at her side.

Lord Montressor looked surprised and perplexed.

"Excuse me, Madam, did I understand you to say——"

"That this lad is Brande—Master? Yes, sir! The vessel belongs to him and his brother, and sails under his name. But until he attains his majority and acquires a competent knowledge of navigation and seamanship, I, his sister, am Acting Master. I am the responsible person here, sir, if you have business with the ship. (Ahoy, there! Bob! man the long boat and go on shore to bring off those bales.) Now I am ready to listen to you, sir."

"Excuse me, Madam! but expecting to find Captain Brande to treat with, I came on board hoping to be able to secure a passage to the West Indies for myself and men."

"Who are you, sir?" The question was frank, direct, and abrupt like all her talk.

"Pardon me, I should have anticipated your question; I am the Viscount Montressor."

"And how many men have you, sir?"

"Two—a valet and a groom."

"Well, sir, I know of no reason why you should not find a berth here. We are prepared to accommodate a limited number of passengers. (Look alive there, boys!) We sail on the first of October, sir, wind and tide favoring, and shall be glad of your company."

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Here was a dilemma!

Lord Montressor was, of course, far too high-bred to *express* his surprise, perplexity and doubt, and he was also too self-possessed to *betray* those emotions to any creature less quick-sighted and penetrating than the Amazon before him.

As it was, Barbara saw and understood the utmost extent of his amazement, hesitation, and curiosity—perhaps it piqued her, for she suddenly exclaimed—

"Well, sir! since you have come on business, bring it to a conclusion. Question me, sir. Question me, sir. I had far rather be questioned by a gentleman, than see him stand silent before me, suffering the pangs of suppressed curiosity!"

The blood rushed to Lord Montressor's brow, and half in displeasure, half in amusement, he replied—

"I regret very much that I have such a tell-tale countenance—but I am sure you will pardon me for the involuntary betrayal of the surprise I felt, at finding so young and handsome a woman, in so novel a position."

Barbara bowed—lowly, and perhaps ironically.

"You arraign me, sir! if not in words, yet in thought. I am put upon my defense. Come, sir! read the indictment—let me hear wherein I have broken the laws of God or man."

("What a termagant!" thought Lord Montressor; but he said)—

"Nay, indeed, Miss Brande, I arraign you not—I simply *wonder*—begging pardon, for even so much."

("He thinks I am a vixen," said Barbara to herself; then aloud)—

"There is no need of wonder, sir. It is all very simple. I am left guardian to two boy brothers, whom I am to support, and to bring up to self-support. I chose the means best fitted to the end."

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"But might not some more—I beg pardon, I grow impertinent."

"Not so, since I have challenged examination, sir!—you were about to inquire——?"

"Whether some more proper feminine occupation might not have been found?"

"I thought so! there it is again! What, precisely, do you call proper feminine occupation?—sewing? teaching? acting? keeping boarders? selling goods?" Barbara drew a long and deep inspiration, that seemed to relieve her breast of the weight of these thoughts, and resumed—"No, sir—these may all be sufficiently feminine, but they require certain qualifications in which, happily or unhappily, I am deficient; they also involve confinement, subordination, and patronage—which my soul could not, for an instant, brook! For I am born to freedom, independence, and domination!"

"Yet, methinks all these are not incompatible with the life of a hostess, a teacher, or a shopkeeper."

Barbara laughed scornfully.

"Yes, Miss Brande, it does suggest itself to me that a sufficiency of freedom, independence and domination might be found in a house of your own, a school of your own, or a shop of your own."

"And still more in a SHIP of my own!" cried Barbara—her black eyes flashing in triumph and exultation.

Lord Montressor regarded the handsome Amazon, with an expression half of admiration, half of wonder. She continued—

"No, sir, I am unfitted by nature and education to spend my life in pouring out coffee for old bachelors, pointing out A, B, C's to little children, or pulling down goods for idle lady-shoppers. And on the other hand—I am prepared both by constitution and culture for my present vocation. Like all the men and women of my house, I love the sea; from four years old to fourteen, I sailed with my

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father, who taught me navigation and seamanship, which I, with my ardent attractions to the subject, learned much more readily and thoroughly, than many a dull or unwilling cadet of the Naval schools has done. So being prepared for it, driven toward it, and attracted by it, I enter my sea-life. No, Lord Montressor, there is something in my blood and in my circumstances, that could not brook the quiet land life you have cut out for me! no more than the majority of women could bear the life into which I rush with enthusiasm. Be it so! every one to the bent of their own taste and talent. Such I take to be God's order."

"I have nothing more to say, Miss Brande, except this: Taking it for granted that you are, as you say, well fitted for your position; still, are you *safe?* In exigencies that may arise, when life may depend upon discipline, will your crew obey you?"

Barbara smiled proudly and confidently. "Lord Montressor! you are, doubtless, a better student in history than myself! Have you noticed in your reading, that whenever the reins of government have fallen into the hands of woman, they have been less successful than men in enforcing their authority and putting down revolt? Did England's magnificent Elizabeth ever quail before her ministers, or her people, or fail to enforce her own royal will?—or Russia's terrific Catherine, blench in the bloodiest scenes of her time? There are such Elizabeths and Catherines at the present day, and in the humblest walks of life, sir."

Lord Montressor bowed, and Barbara continued—

"As for my crew, I have the means of compelling them to obedience."

His lordship looked incredulous.

"There are but eight souls in all of this ship's company—first, there is myself, Acting-Master, and my black maid—then come my two brothers, who are devoted to their sister; then my two negroes, who will obey me as only old

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family servants, who have watched over me on land and sea, from childhood to womanhood, would do; and, lastly, there are two enlisted men—one of whom is an old seaman, who sailed often with my father, and is perfectly reliable; and the other is a young fellow whose countenance is a letter of recommendation, if he had no other—as he has. So that you see, sir, I have not an insubordinate or dangerous character on board."

"I see you have exercised judgment in the selection of your hands."

"With all this, sir, you may not feel sufficient confidence in my competency for the post I have assumed, to trust your valuable life with us for the voyage. Nevertheless, sir, Messrs. Gobright & Co., Merchants on Light street—men who are not suspected of lunacy, have entrusted me with a very valuable cargo."

Lord Montressor bowed absently; his thoughts had reverted to one far away.

"Am I to understand that you decline a berth with us, sir?" inquired Barbara.

This brought his lordship to the point

"Certainly not, Miss Brande. Upon all accounts, I would not forego this opportunity—no, not for a seat in his majesty's cabinet."

"Come, then, into the cabin and let us arrange the terms—come you, also, Willful! you must learn to transact business," said Barbara, beckoning Lord Montressor and her brother to follow.

They went below, and the terms—where one party was willing and the other anxious—were soon concluded to their mutual satisfaction.

It was near sunset when Lord Montressor left the vessel for the shore, to return to his hotel.

He employed the succeeding days of the week in writing letters to England, and in preparations for his voyage.

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Was it strange that, in his conversations with Barbara, he should never once have mentioned or even remotely alluded to the object of his voyage? We think not; for the subject of his lost Estelle was too sacred to be approached, except under urgent necessity, or in the hope of obtaining direct information. And what necessity did there seem to be for taking Barbara into his confidence? what information could he suppose her able to give? or what connection could he possibly imagine to exist between his delicate and reserved Estelle and this brave daughter of the sea? In fact, he never once thought of such a possibility. And yet, had he once broached the subject, how soon Barbara could have told him that Mrs. Estelle had sailed, not for the West India Isles as he supposed, but for a much nearer point, namely, Brande's Headland, a hundred miles or so down the bay.

So full is life of mere paper walls!

It was a fine frosty morning, the first of October, when the Petrel was to sail. A fresh wind that had sprung up during the night was blowing from the north-west. At daybreak Lord Montressor entered a hack to drive down to the wharf. His valet and groom followed, with the baggage on a dray. A ride of an hour brought them to the scene of embarkation. The wharves presented a busy, animating appearance. The harbor was crowded with shipping, whose tall masts, yards, and ropes were distinctly traced upon the background of a clear blue sky. But the Petrel stood off at anchor, some cables' length down the river. And to reach her, it was necessary to hire one of the many boats that glided in and out among the vessels.

Lord Montressor signalled his groom from the top of his dray, and dispatched him to engage one.

The man soon effected this purpose; and a large, substantial boat, roomy enough to accommodate Lord Montressor, his attendants and his baggage, was rowed up close

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alongside the wharf upon which they stood. The trunks were first lowered into the boat, then Lord Montressor, followed by his valet and his groom, entered and seated himself in the stern. The four sailors laid themselves to their oars, and the boat flew over the water.

In a few minutes they were alongside the, Petrel which, in her neatest trim, was preparing to get under way. They pulled around to the starboard gangway, where Lord Montressor went immediately up the ladder and stood upon the deck.

In truth, the vessel presented an animating spectacle. Some of the men were busy with the ropes, others with the windlass. The eldest boy was at the tiller.

But most conspicuous upon the deck stood the handsome Amazon, Barbara Brande, in her strong, grey serge dress, but bareheaded, with the fresh wind making free with her blackest of tresses, and flushing with a deeper crimson her sun-burned cheeks. She stood there self-possessed and giving orders in her own clear, ringing, decided tones.

Seeing Lord Montressor, she immediately came forward to meet him, saying, in her high, cheerful voice:

"Welcome, sir! you are just in time, We shall be under way in half an hour. You know where to find your quarters, sir. Will you go below, or——"

"I will remain on deck, if you please, Miss Brande," said his lordship, who was not a little curious and interested to see how this girl would proceed to get her vessel under sail —feeling doubtful, also, of the sound discretion of embarking his life on such a venture.

"Very well, sir! as you please."

And Barbara left him and went forward.

"Ahoy, there, Willful! see to getting Lord Montressor's baggage up."

The lad left the tiller to obey. The hoisting of the trunks occupied but a few minutes; the stowing them but a few more.

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The deck being then clear again, Barbara went forward to give orders, which she did in short, firm, resonant tones, that must have startled a stranger less prepared for them than Lord Montressor.

"All hands up anchor! Each man to his post!—and you, Willful, to the helm!"

The orders were obeyed with alacrity.

"Man the windlass."

The four sailors came forward and laid themselves to the bars.

"Heave! heave hearty, my men! And you, Edwy, play up, my boy!"

This last order was given to the younger lad, who raised the fife he held in his hand and began to play a lively inspiring air, while the men with all their strength heaved at the windlass. The anchor was soon apeak, and hauled up to the side of the vessel, catted and fished.

"Quick! now, my men!—haul in the larboard braces forward!—haul home the starboard braces abaft!" shouted Barbara.

It was done.

"Stand by to set the tops'il! Man the lee sheet! Ease down the buntlines and lee clew-line! Haul home the lee sheet! Now then, hoist away! Cheerly, boys—cheerly! Brace all taut!"

The tops'll thus set, the vessel moved slowly before the wind, bearing down toward a schooner that was coming in, on the lee side.

Barbara shouted—

"You, Willful! what are you about there? Port the helm! Keep her clear of that schooner a-head! So—steady—nothing off!"

The lad understanding the risk, exerted himself until all danger of collision was past.

"Set the jib!—there!—Hoist the mains'il!—Brace

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round—there—there!—Stand by to haul out the mizzen! —And you, Willful, helm-a-lee!—so!—steady—stead-y!"

The sails now filled with the wind, the craft moved swiftly onward. But Barbara thought that she could carry more canvas. She gave the order—

"Stand by to hoist the to'-gallant-s'il!"

The men worked heartily. And the vessel, now under as much sail as she could safely carry, ran before the wind, and passing between the North Point and the Bodkin, stood gallantly out to sea.

Barbara drew a long breath, and came aft to speak to her passenger. Her cheeks were beautifully flushed, her eyes were sparkling, and her black hair, in that short ripple that indicates great vigor of constitution, was floating freely in the breeze. She seemed in no wise "breathed" by her late exertions. Lord Montressor, as he looked at her, thought he had never in his life seen a finer woman.

"We have the prospect of a pleasant voyage, sir," she said. "With us, the prevailing winds are, at this season, from the North West; we shall probably sail before a fair wind the whole way. Neither, this month, is there much chance of a thunder storm."

Lord Montressor bowed. "That is an agreeable hearing, Miss Brande; but do you not stop at any port on your voyage out?"

"At no port, sir; but I shall cast anchor for a few hours at the Headland—my old home, sir, where I shall have to go ashore, to settle some final business with the young widow lady who has leased it of me. And if you shall be disposed to accompany me there, sir, I can show you one of the oldest houses in Maryland—a house that was built in the year 1635."

"And when shall we reach this Headland?"

"With this fair wind, in six or seven days, sir."

Now what fatality was it, that prevented Lord Montres-

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sor from finding out the name of "the young widow lady" who had leased Barbara Brande's house?—or from at once accepting her invitation, when they should reach the Headland, to go on shore and look at the house? That life is full of blindly missed possibilities, is the only answer I can find.

They continued talking much longer; Lord Montressor growing every moment more pleased with his acquaintance; for there was a frankness, a directness, an uprightness and a *down*rightness about Barbara Brande, that commanded respect.

"Excuse me now, sir," she said, at last, "I must go and relieve my young helmsman; he is tired, I know," and going forward, she took the tiller from the hand of the boy and sent him away.

They had, as Barbara predicted, a very quick and pleasant run down the Bay; and on the morning of the eighth day, at sunrise, anchored off the Headland.

Lord Montressor came on deck, where he found Barbara giving her orders. On seeing him she came aft.

"Good-morning, sir! You are out early! We have just cast anchor. We shall lie here all day Look, sir! there is my dear, old home."

Lord Montressor looked across the water to the dark Headland that, crested with its old forest trees, loomed to leeward. The sun, rising behind the shore, threw the whole place into the deepest shadow—altogether it presented a gloomy, weird, and forbidding aspect.

"It is very picturesque," said Lord Montressor.

"Yes!—and very interesting in some of its features. They are getting ready the boat for me to go on shore. I should be happy to have you over, if you would like to accompany me."

"I thank you, Miss Brande—if you or your tenant will give me the privilege of a day's shooting in your woods, I

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shall be pleased to go on shore," said Lord Montressor, bowing.

"Oh, sir! We have no game-laws or preserves here! Our game is as free as it is abundant—our woods as open as they are extensive. I am very glad that you should be able to amuse yourself for a day. There are also stanch pointers at the Headland, and old Neptune who has them in charge will be as good a guide as any gamekeeper in England," said Barbara.

Lord Montressor expressed his thanks.

"And now, my lord, let us to breakfast; and then to the boats."

Lord Montressor first went below to order his groom to get out his fowling-piece, powder-flask, shot-pouch, game-bag, etc., and then followed Barbara into the cabin, where the early morning meal was spread.

After breakfast, leaving Willful and two sailors in charge of the vessel, Barbara, her younger brother, Lord Montressor, and his groom entered the boat and were rowed rapidly toward the Headland. On reaching the beach Barbara said—

"Will you go up to the house, sir?"

"No, I thank you very much, Miss Brande; I think not," replied his lordship, feeling unwilling to intrude upon the unknown Lady, who was Barbara's tenant.

"Then—come hither, Edwy! attend Lord Montressor to Uncle Nep's quarter. Tell the old man to take the dogs, and show his lordship where to find the birds," said Barbara.

Edwy came forward and bowed, expressing his readiness.

And with a mutual "good-morning," the parties separated—Barbara Brande going up to the house, while Lord Montressor and his companions sought the woods.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RECLUSE.

'Oh! might I here
In solitude live hidden—in some glade
Obscure, where highest woods, impenetrable
To star or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad
And dark as evening. Cover me, ye pines,
Ye cedars; with innumerable boughs
Hide me where they may never find me more."—*Milton.*

We left Estelle and her attendant on the lonely beach below the Headland, with the night coming on.

They looked about themselves.

At their feet lay the baggage, with no one near to take it away. Above their heads arose the steep cedar-grown bank, with no visible path up its ascent.

Westward rolled the infinite sea, now fast darkening under the evening sky.

Eastward stretched the impenetrable forest, falling into deeper gloom under the lowering shadows of night.

From the sombre and solitary scene they turned to look into each other's faces.

"Blessed saints, my lady! what a savage coast! does any living thing inhabit it, do you think?" asked Susan, with a shudder.

"Why, certainly, you know it, my girl."

"Beg your pardon, dear lady, but indeed, no, I don't know it. I'm afraid the captain has put us ashore at the wrong place; and I, for my part, feel as if we were cast upon some desert island."

"But did you not see the house from the ship?"

"Yes, my lady; but now I think of it, that makes the

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matter more frightful; for it must have been a bewitched house, and we must be on enchanted ground, else what's become of it? I don't see so much as a chimney of it!"

"Because we are below the line of vision, being too close under the bank. The house is up on the headland, back among the trees."

"Then how shall I break a path for you, dear lady? for you can never get through these briars!"

"There is a path broken, and well worn, of course. And there is an aged couple of servants somewhere near here, who, Miss Brande informed me, had the keys, and would show us up to the house, and open it for us. The path to their cabin starts from this landing, she said. Let us look for it, Susan."

"Holy saints, my lady, the sky is growing so dark that I could not see a conflagration!" said the girl, peering closely to the ground; "and the grass is so thickly strewn with fallen leaves, that——"

"Sarvint, Mist'ess!" uttered a gentle, growling sort of voice from the bushes near her.

"Ah-h-h!!" yelled the maid. "Sweet Providence, what is that? We shall be murdered by this savage," and frantic with terror, she ran toward her mistress.

Estelle laid her hand soothingly upon the girl's shoulder, and turned to see what the cause of the alarm might be.

It was the gentle-hearted old negro, Neptune, who now emerged from the bushes, and came into full view. And if the terrible sea-god himself had risen from the waters, sceptre in hand, he could not have stricken greater terror to the heart of the simple English maiden! And, in truth, the mistress also gazed upon the apparition in some doubt, as well she might, for the good old man was rather an awful looking object.

His form was tall, gaunt, and bent beneath the weight of an hundred winters. His face was black, hard, shining

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and seamed with wrinkles as a dried prune, and framed around with snow-white hair and beard in spectral contrast to its blackness. A suit of duck, seeming almost as old and weatherworn as himself, and a tattered blanket, pinned with a thorn around his neck, and hanging in ragged folds about his figure; a black tarpaulin hat, with a red handkerchief passed over the crown and round under his chin; and shoes of undressed leather, completed his strange and picturesque attire.

In his hand he carried a rugged, unhewn club, upon which he leaned in walking.

On approaching the strangers, he pulled the hat and handkerchief from his head, and holding them, came on, bowing and bowing, as in deprecation of their displeasure for the fright he had unconsciously given.

The maid shrank away, but the mistress went forward to meet him.

"Sarvint, Mist'ess," once more said the old man, bowing very humbly, and then standing hat in hand before the lady.

"Good-evening. You are Miss Brande's servant?"

"Yes, Mist'ess."

"She has let me her house. She referred me to you for the keys. We have just arrived to take possession. Will you, therefore, be so good as to get the keys, and show us the way thither?" said the lady.

Now, this event was so unexpected that it took some time to make its way into the slow and unprepared brain of the old negro. He found nothing to say or do, but only stood bowing and bowing. Lady Montressor repeated her directions.

But the old man, "still far wide," only answered by another deep obeisance, and the pointless words:

"Yes, Mist'ess—'deed it are."

Lady Montressor glanced hopelessly around toward

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Susan, who stood peeping over her mistress's shoulder, and whose fears had disappeared before the gentle, deprecating manners of the black.

"Why, what an old jelly brain!" she exclaimed impatiently, coming forward and confronting the old man.

"Yes, honey, jes' so," replied the latter, bowing to her, and in no degree disturbed by the rudeness of her words.

"Chut! can't you understand, you antique idiot, that my mistress has rented the house from Miss Brande, and that she wants to get into it?" asked Susan, angrily.

"'Cisely so, honey. When's Miss Barbara spected home?" asked the old creature, mildly.

Susan lost the last remnant of her patience.

"Look here, ancient simpleton, we are tired of standing here! Where are the keys?" she peremptorily demanded.

The curtness of her tone brought the old man at last to a point.

"There ain't but one key—de front door key; I carries it about with me. 'Cisely so, Mist'ess, here it are," he said, producing a huge, old-fashioned iron key, that might have sufficed for a prison lock.

"Well, now, go on before us, and open the door," commanded Susan.

"Yes, Mist'ess; zactly so, chile," was the meek reply, as the old man, advancing his stick, groped along and struck into the narrow hidden path, leading up the ascent of the headland.

"But, stop! will the baggage be safe here?" inquired Susan.

"'Cisely so, honey. Dere's nothin' to 'sturb it," said Uncle Neptune.

"Dear lady, please take hold of my arm; the path is very steep, and slippery with the fallen leaves," said the maid.

It was now quite dark.

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Lady Montressor availed herself of the proffered assistance, and in a few minutes they reached the top of the headland, and stood upon a level with the ancient trees and the old house, half hidden among them, and dimly perceived through the darkness. Uncle Neptune going before, went up the steps and unlocked the door.

"Take care, my lady, for the love of mercy! there is not a plank fast on these ricketty stairs," said Susan, anxiously guiding her delicate lady's steps up into the dilapidated portico.

Old Neptune was within side the door, hammering at something that he held in his hand, and with which he presently struck a light, by means of which they saw the whole length of the old-fashioned hall; and beside the front door a tiny cupboard, from which the old man had produced a tinder-box and a candle.

"Dis way, Mist'ess. 'Cisely so! Dis is the bes' parlor," he said, opening the door on the right, and admitting them into a large, scantily-furnished room.

The single tallow-candle made the darkness here so terribly "visible," that the old man, after standing it upon the solitary table, and dragging forward two rush-bottom chairs for the strangers, hurried out to the little cupboard, and brought three or four more candles, which he lighted, and set in a row on the mantle-piece.

With this extra illumination, Susan looked critically around upon "the best parlor." The vast dreary room had one great merit—immaculate cleanliness. The bare walls were white, the bare floor was pure. One oak table stood between the two front windows, and upon it sat the model of a frigate, under full sail—the work of Willful Brande; at equal distances around the room were ranged a half-dozen rush-bottom chairs; the wide fire-place was filled with fresh cedar boughs; on the mantle-piece were several rare sea shells, an empty ostrich egg, a whale's tooth, a fragment of

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the old "Constitution," sprays of coral, lumps of amber, and other articles collected by Captain Brande during his numerous voyages. That was all.

Though this was the tenth of October, the night was very chilly, and the large room really cold.

"Would you like a fire, Mist'ess?" asked Uncle Neptune.

"Yes! certainly, yes! What are you thinking of? Ugh! I believe we had as well gone to Lapland," exclaimed Susan.

The old man took the mass of evergreens from the chimney, carried them out, and soon returned with an armfull of brush, with which he proceeded to light a fire. As the cheerful blaze crackled and ran up the chimney, diffusing light and warmth throughout the room, Susan rubbed her hands, congratulated her mistress, and set a chair near the fire for her accommodation.

"Now then, old father! you *are* a nice old man, on a longer acquaintance—how shall we get our baggage to the house?" inquired the girl.

"Hem-m—Jes so, chile. Me and my ole 'oman and Sam kin fetch it."

"Sam?"

"'Cisely so, honey—Island Sam, as is on a wisit to us."

"Some acquaintance of yours, I suppose. Very well, my good old father! go and attend to it, and you shall be well paid for your trouble."

"Zactly so, honey," replied the poor old fellow, bowing himself out.

When the door closed behind him, Susan took off her bonnet and shawl, put them on a chair and approached her mistress, who during these few minutes, had been sitting before the fire, in a mood of deep abstraction.

"Come, Madam, permit me to relieve you of these," she said, gently and respectfully, as she untied the ribbons and

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removed her lady's bonnet, and unbuttoned and took off her mantle.

Lady Montressor suffered her to proceed, and then drew a deep inspiration.

"Don't sigh, dear lady!" said Susan, mistaking the cause of her mistress's pensiveness—"the old barn is, after all, not so bad. Means will make it very comfortable, and even now it is perfectly clean."

"Sit down, und cease to trouble yourself, child. The house does very well," said Lady Montressor.

Susan obeyed, and was very still for about fifteen minutes, at the end of which the footsteps of the men bearing the baggage were heard approaching.

She hurried out to meet them. The trunks were brought in, and placed for the present in the hall, and the men went back to bring the hampers.

But the old woman who had accompanied them, came into the parlor to offer her services to the lady. Going up to her, she stood and courtesied, with the customary—

"Sarvint, Mist'ess."

Lady Montressor lifted her languid eyes to look at this new-comer.

She was a little, old, dried up, jet-black negro, looking as though she had grown hard and strong with age. She was dressed in a bright plaid linsey petticoat, with a blue cotton short gown, and a check handkerchief tied over her head.

"Sarvint, Mist'ess," she repeated; "kin I be of any sarvice?"

"Who are you, my good woman?" asked Lady Montressor, gently.

"My name's Aunt Amphy, honey, 'deed it is, child—Aunt Amphy. I's be known to all the country roun', for a 'spectable, 'sponsible, age-able ole 'oman, as knows how to 'duct herself proper'—and as any lady may put conference in. 'Deed is *I*, honey."

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"I do not doubt it," said Lady Montressor, contemplating this original with a good deal of curiosity—"you said your name was——"

"Aunt Amphy, child: 'deed it is! least ways that's what they do call me, aldough de name give me by my sponsors in Babtism wer Amphitryte, arter the Queen of the Ocean."

"Yes. Well, can I do any thing for you, Amphy?"

"Lor bless you, no, child! no, honey! not a singley thing! I's independent, thanks be to my 'Vine Marster. I come to see if I could be of any sarvice to you, child, in showing you the house and furniter—seeing how you've rented of it jes as it stands—and if I could make de beds, or get supper ready for you, or any thing."

"I thank you: you are very kind. I accept your services, and will reward them; there is my maid; you can consult and assist her. Susan, come hither, my girl."

Susan came forward.

"Here is this good woman, Amphy, who will show you through the house and render you any assistance you may need."

"Yes, child—'deed will *I*," put in the woman.

"Very well, come along then, and show me where the kitchen is, first of all," said Susan.

"Yes, honey—keep close arter me. And don't you be 'fraid now, if de house is haunted," said Amphy.

There was not far to go. Amphy simply crossed the hall, and opening the opposite door on the left hand side, ushered her companion into the room used as a kitchen;—such a poor place! so clean, yet so bare of furniture; a wide fire-place with iron fire-dogs, and surmounted by a mantle-piece upon which stood a row of brass candlesticks, a corner cupboard—the upper part with glass doors—containing common white delf ware, a wooden table and four wooden chairs, were all the visible articles of furniture.

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"Dar honey! What do you say to *dat* for a 'spectable kitchen?" exclaimed the old woman in triumph.

"Where are the cooking utensils?" asked Susan, eluding the other's question.

"The *which*, honey?"

"The tea-kettle, and saucepan, and toasting-fork, and so on."

"Oh, yes, child, surely! Dey's in de bottom o' de cupboard."

"Now, then, if you will show me where to get some wood and water, I will have the fire made and the kettle on by the time the hampers arrive."

"I'll go get de wood and water, child—you jes go and wait to unpack de hampers."

"Very well; thank you; go."

The fire was soon kindled; the hampers were brought in and unpacked; and Susan's dexterous and willing fingers quickly prepared a light repast of black tea, toast, and two poached eggs, which she neatly arranged upon a waiter and carried in and set before her mistress.

"Now *do*, sweet lady, try to eat something," she said, affectionately—"these eggs look like snowballs; this toast is browned to a turn, and this tea—better never came from Canton—try now while I go and see what prospect there is for comfortable sleeping."

And leaving the sad-browed lady, she called Amphy from the hall, and directed her to show the way to the best chamber.

The old woman merely opened the door connecting the parlor in which they stood with the back room, and said:

"Dar! Dat Miss Barbara's own sleepin' room, and its de bes' in de house."

It was as bare and as clean as the other apartments. An open fireplace, filled with fragrant pine boughs, and flanked on either side by a linen and clothes press; a four-

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posted bedstead with a comfortable bed, well made up and covered with a white counterpane; a tall, three-legged toilet-table laid with a coarse white cloth, and furnished with a small looking-glass; a pine washstand, with a plain delf-ware basin and ewer, and two wicker chairs, completed the appointments for comfort.

"This is all very clean and neat to say the least and *most* of it," remarked Susan, looking around. "But—has the room, and especially the bed, been aired lately?"

"De Lor, child! It bin aired *all de time!* De trouble *we* has is jes to keep de air *out'n* dis ole house," said Amphy.

"I believe you! But it is necessary to make up a fire and take the bed to pieces to change the sheets, for they may be damp."

"Damp! he-he-he! De Lors, honey! *ole* as de house is, dere ain't not the least bit o' damp, or must, or moulder, anywhere about it. It are so high up here, dat eberytime it rain, ebery singley bit'n de water run right off'n it! an' it so dry we kin hardly git a bit o' wegables to grow here. Damp! Lors, honey!"

"Well, I'm glad to hear it is not so; but at all events it is cold. So you take that pine out of the fireplace and kindle a fire, while I take the clothes off the bed. Where is the linen closet?"

"Dis a-one," replied Amphy, pointing out the right hand press, and then lifting the mass of pine boughs to carry them from the room.

In a short time the chamber was made comfortable. And Susan closed it up, and, accompanied by Amphy, left the room.

"Now, child, dere's anoder bed-room correspondin' to dis, as open out'n de kitchen on de other side o' de hall, you know, as used to be the Captin's room, Heaven rest

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his soul! and which I reckon would suit you. It's clean as a penny, too, only full of sailor's truck."

"Thank you, Mother Amphy, I shall do very well," said Susan, as they entered the parlor.

Susan went immediately to the side of Lady Montressor, whom she found with her elbow resting on the edge of the table, her head bowed upon her hand, and her face in the deep shadow of her drooping ringlets. She was sunk in profound thought, and the little refection stood almost untouched beside her.

Susan heaved a deep sigh.

"This is the way! always the way! I may prepare her the nicest little repast in the world, and she scarcely ever eats; I may make up the softest bed, and she hardly ever sleeps! and I—I wear out my life tending and watching her, to no purpose! I don't know what she lives on, I am sure, unless it is on grief and obstinacy, and she is dreadfully obstinate! If ever again I tack my fortunes on to those of a runaway lady—may I—— but the Lord bless her! and the Lord forsake me if ever I forsake her," thought Susan, as she silently removed the service, and beckoned Amphy to follow her from the room.

"Come into the kitchen and take a cup of tea with me, Mother Amphy. My heart is heavy, and I want somebody to talk to," said Susan, when she had closed the parlor door behind her.

"Thankee, honey, wid all de pleasure in life, since you's so 'bliging. I should 'joy a rale good cup o' tea; and I warrant de Madam keeps de werry best," said the old woman, as she followed Susan into the kitchen.

When they had drawn out the table, arranged it, and seated themselves, Amphy said—

"De lors! ain't she purty dough?"

"Who?"

"De child in dere—de Madam I mean—*wonderful*

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purty!—but what's de matter wid her, honey? she seems to be in a heap o' trouble! Is de child a widder?"

"Hem-m! Yes, she's a widow (—*bewitched*—there's another consequence of following a runaway lady! I shall have to lose my soul with lying, or, what is as bad, distorting the truth,)" thought Susan.

"A widder! *poor* thing! she take it wonderful hard! How long she bin a widder, honey?"

"Some months."

"Dis *is* wonderful good tea! Some mont's! and she ain't begin to git over it yet? And I spose dat what she come down to this lonesome place for?"

"Yes."

"De Lors! Well 'tis 'stonishin' how dey do take on at fust—dese young widders! but lors! it don't las long, 'specially when dey's young and handsome as *she*—and she's *wonderful* handsome! It 'minds me of a purty young widder as I know'd of; her husband done die of de fever. Lors! Lors! Lors! how she did take on at fust, to be sure! Nobody couldn't hold her! nobody darsent come nigh her! Byme-by, she take and buy a lonesome country place, 'way off in a woody park, by itself.

"And she go dere to 'tire from de worl'; 'fuse to see any company; 'fuse to see her own dear friends; spent de live long day in walkin' up and down de locust avenue, a thinkin' on her husband in his grave. Byme-by, toward de fall, dere came back from furrin parts, a young Capt'in Lovel, who was a sort o' quaintance o' hern; and he sends and begs de privilege o' jes shootin' game in her woods, an' he won't come nigh de house, nor 'sturb anybody. And she guv him leave; 'cause she was too sorrowful to care 'bout it, one way or t'other. So he kept roamin' through de woods, wid gun and dog, day arter day. At last he happen to meet she in her solemncolly walks. First 'twas only a bow one side, and a sigh t'other, as they passed each other

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Next 'twas a bow one side, and a melanchollum *smile* t'other. Next it was—'Good-mornin, madam,' and 'How do you do, sir?'

"Arter a bit it growed—"A fine day, madam'—'What sport have you had, sir?' 'Good, though excessive fatiguin', madam,' &c. 'Wont you walk in an' res' sir?' And so de handsome Capt'in gradu'ly got to visitin' de house; till bye-by, de May followin' bless patience if dey wa'n't married! True for you, honey! I aint a tellin' of you a bit o' lie! 'Stead o'goin down in de church *yard* with her dead husband she went into de church altar wid a live one; and 'stead o' 'mitten' suicide she went an' mitted matrimony! Dem's um! Ah, dat young Capti'n was a deep one! *He* know'd pretty little widders! and so do I; I knows dere ways! Dey gits over it! And so will de child in dere. You mind! if some handsome young capt'in don't come before long to hunt *her* up—why she get tired o' stayin and go into the world agin to hunt some young Capt'in up. Dat's all! Dar! don't you be oneasy."

"Your theory don't apply to my mistress, though, Mother Amphy. *She* is not an ordinary woman, nor are her sorrows common ones," said Susan, carried past the bounds of prudence by her indignation at the idea of her own illustrious and most unhappy lady being compared to any other "widder."

"De Lors! child has she seen any heavier trouble dan de loss of husband?"

"She lost husband, mother, father, and many relatives and friends at one fell blow. She is mourning now for them all."

"De 'Vine Marster in Heaben, honey! what dat you tell me!" exclaimed the old woman, rolling up her eyes in horror.

"I am telling you the truth."

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"Was it a shipwreck?" asked Amphy, her thoughts recurring to the Mercury.

"Worse than that, it was an earthquake."

"A YETHQUAKE—MY! Where did it happen of, honey?"

"In a land beyond the seas. Now you must know that I hate to talk about these things, Amphy. So drink your tea, that is a good soul, and let me drink mine."

"Yes, honey, yes; 'tis wonderful good tea indeed, 'specially with white sugar in it. I'se wery sorry for de chile —wery!"

"After all," thought Susan, "I might as well have given her this reason for my lady's deep mourning, and sorrow-stricken countenance, as to have her always wondering about it, and perhaps talking of it."

She then changed the conversation, and inquired about the neighbors, which she discovered to be a "minus quantity" in that district; and then about the traditional ghost, that haunts every old half-ruined, country mansion, and which ought, of course, to be on duty at the Headland House, and which she found, in this instance, to be "a lady all in white, who wandered about the house and grounds at night, weeping and wringing her hands."

"The Lord forbid that I should believe in ghosts; but still I'd rather not have heard the story; for if I happen to go through the upper rooms, in the dark, or look out of any of the windows, it will scarcely be in human nature not to take a patch of moonlight, or the silvery bark of a white maple or beech tree, for the ghost of the white-robed lady," said Susan.

"Ah, child! if *dat's* de worst you see."

"But who was she when she was alive?"

"Ah, honey, she lib many and many a year ago! Her name Miss Blanche Brande. She was crossed in love, you see, child, and she's jes pined away and died, and has been walking here eber since."

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"A very weak-minded ghost! I don't think I shall be afraid of Miss Blanche," said Susan.

"Wait till midnight, honey! only jes wait till midnight."

As it was now very late, the old woman arose to take leave.

"Der's wood enough in for yer mornin' fire, honey, and please de Lor' I'll step up here yerly in de mornin', and fetch yer anoder pail of fresh water to put de kettle on.

"Thank you, yes; if you and your old man can engage to bring the water and cut the wood, and assist me in the little house-work when your services are needed, my mistress is liberal, and will pay you well."

"I wasn't thinkin' nothin' 'bout no pay, honey. However, jes as you please 'bout dat. I'll be round yerly in de mornin'," said Amphy, preparing to depart, by tying her check handkerchief closely under her chin, and taking up her thick walking-stick.

"Good-night, child. I'd a heap liefer it be *you* nor *me* stayin' in dis lonesome ole house all night. Marster bress you, honey."

And with this benediction, the namesake of the ocean goddess departed.

Susan was not more than ordinarily superstitious—that is to say—in broad daylight, or in a room full of company, she did not believe in "ghosts;" but at ten o'clock of a dark night, alone in a room of an old dilapidated country-house, reputed to be haunted, she felt at least uncomfortable.

She quickly set the kitchen in order, and went into the parlor to rejoin her mistress.

She found Lady Montressor in the very same attitude in which she had two hours before left her—with her elbow resting upon the table, her head bowed upon her hand, and her dark ringlets overshadowing her face. It seemed that in two hours she had not once moved. The fire had burned so nearly out, that nothing remained but a few embers.

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"Dear lady, it is after ten o'clock—will you retire?"

"Yes," with a deep sigh answered Lady Montressor.

"Your chamber is well-aired and warmed—shall I show you into it now?"

"Yes," with another weary sigh, replied the lady, rising.

Susan opened the communicating door, and ushered her mistress into the bedroom.

There was a cheerful fire burning on the broad fire-place and diffusing a ruddy glow throughout the large room.

"I hope you find every thing here as comfortable as circumstances will admit of, my lady."

"Yes"—in the same exhausted manner answered the mourner—then, in her thoughtfulness of her devoted servant, she added—"I thank you, Susan?"

The maid hurried away into the hall, and returned with the large traveling-basket in which she had packed her mistress's night-dress and toilet articles. These she quickly produced and laid out. Then she assisted her lady to undress, and when she was quite ready for bed, prepared as usual to leave her alone for her evening devotions, which were the very last acts of Lady Montressor, before lying down to her nightly rest.

"Do you think you will sleep well to-night, my lady?" inquired Susan, affectionately.

"As well as usual, my girl," answered Lady Montressor, evasively.

"Good-night, then, my lady; may the angels guard you."

"Good-night —— but stay; are your sleeping accommodations comfortable?"

"Yes, I thank your ladyship; I have the room directly opposite to yours, across the hall; if you should be wakeful, or need any thing in the night, dear lady, please knock me up—I shall be sure to hear you."

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"Thank you, my child, I will, if there should be any need. Now go to your rest. Good-night."

"Good-night, dear Madam—and may the Lord be with you," said Susan, as she retired and closed the door behind her

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GRAVE-YARD GHOST.

"Strange things, the neighbors say, have happened there!
Wild shrieks have issued from the hollow tombs,
Dead maids have come again, and walked about;
And a great bell has tolled unrung, untouched."—*Blair's Grave.*

Susan crossed the hall and entered her own chamber, which was even more scantily furnished than the other rooms. There was a wide fire-place filled with evergreens and flanked by two closets, as in the others. And there was a four-post bedstead with a bed well made up and covered with a comfortable blue and white check counterpane; and there was an arm-chair and a table upon which stood a quadrant, a compass, an old chronometer, Bouditch's Navigation, and other sailors' belongings. On the mantle-piece were various curiosities, such as a mummy's hand, a New Zealander's skull, a Chinese woman's skeleton foot, and other such enlivening articles of virtu, collected by the late Captain Brande, in his various voyages.

"Ugh! it's enough to chill one's blood, even without the ghost of the white-robed lady! Well! it's a comfort at last that one can say their prayers," said Susan, looking around upon the weird scene.

"And as I hope to be saved," she added, as she examined the room—"there are no shutters outside the windows, and

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no curtains within! So that if the ghost of Blanche chooses to look in through the panes of glass I shall have to shut my eyes to avoid seeing her! Well, praise be to Heaven there remains prayer at least, and no one can be very much afraid who prays very hard!"

And with this consoling conclusion, Susan examined the bed, and finding the sheets all fresh and sweet, hastily undressed herself, said her prayers, put out the candle, and jumped into bed.

But she could not sleep. Reason with herself as she might, the utter isolation of the house, the emptiness of all the chambers, the profound solitude of her own room; the vague dread of runaway negroes, of whose occasional acts of violence she had sometimes read with horror; the story of the white-robed lady, whose ghost was said to wander through the house and grounds;—thoughts that at noon lay, or in company, would have moved her mirthful scorn, now at midnight when she was alone, filled her heart with superstitious terror, which she could neither explain nor discard.

On the right hand of her bed was a large window, unprotected by either curtain or blind, and as often, as in her restless tossing about, she turned to that side, the whole outer scene in that direction was visible to her.

And such a scene! a table land, with here and there a solitary spectral pine, or cedar-tree, and in the midst an old family grave-yard, with ghostly tombstones gleaming dimly white under the clouded starlight. The sea was not visible, but its monotonous and mournful murmur was all but too audible, and formed a strangely appropriate accompaniment to the gloomy aspect.

At each turning, and each glance out upon the wild, dark landscape, Susan grew more nervous, and consequently more superstitious and fearful.

And presently, a little after midnight, the wind arose with

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a sigh and a moan, that seemed like the voice of some denizen of that graveyard, waking from his death-sleep, to walk the earth at night.

Susan covered her head and held her breath. Then half-suffocating, she uncovered it, and looked out. There were the ghostly tombstones gleaming dimly under the clouded sky.

"Oh, my goodness alive! I shall go crazy if I stay here!" cried Susan, rising up into a sitting posture and throwing the bed-clothes off her. She peered cautiously toward the window-pane and looked out. This position gave her a much more extensive view than she had before possessed.

But after the first glance, Susan fell back with a half-suppressed scream, and buried her face in the bed-clothes.

She had seen the form of a white-robed, graceful, female figure moving slowly up and down among the tombstones!

Her eyes were blinded by the blankets pressed around them, yet she could not shut out the vision of that white-robed, beautiful form with its flowing black hair, and clasped hands.

Susan's first impulse was to fly to her lady's room and rouse her; but terror had deprived her of the use of her limbs, and so she lay shuddering and helpless. Presently she remembered the Almighty Protector, and fell to praying.

Now, it is certain that the sincere prayer of a simple, faithful soul, is the antidote for all fear; and in praying, the wild throbs of the girl's heart subsided.

And with returning calmness came the power of motion, and the first impulse of seeking her lady's presence and protection; but then arose the generous thought of not disturbing her rest. And forming a resolution of self-restraint and patience, Susan recommended herself to the care of Heaven, and ventured once more to creep to the side of the

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bed and look toward the window. The spectral form had disappeared, and with a sigh of relief, Susan sank back upon her pillow. The reaction of so great a nervous excitement produced its natural effects, and Susan sank into the deep sleep of exhaustion.

The broad light of morning falling full upon her face awoke her. She started on seeing herself in a strange bed and room, and for some moments could not recollect how she came there; but when memory returned, she arose at once, feeling how heavily and how long she must have slept, and how late it must be.

She hurried on her clothes and went softly across the hall to the room of her mistress, whom she found apparently sleeping.

Then she returned and entered the kitchen. No sooner had her footfall sounded on the plank floor than a knock at the back door arrested her attention. She went and opened it, to find old Amphy there with a pail of water, waiting.

"De Lors, child! how late you—dem does get up, my patience alive! Here I's bin t'ree times to de door, and dis time I jis sots myse'f down to wait—ef it's all day! But I do spose how you was tired."

"Yes, very tired! come in."

The old creature entered and proceeded to fill the kettle, while Susan lighted the fire.

"How you sleep last night? You didn't see nuffi'n, did you?"

"Hush—I'll tell you after a bit. I don't believe I really saw any thing, but I believe I *fancied* I saw that white vestured female figure gliding among the tombstones," said Susan, with a retrospective shudder.

"'*Tis she!* Sure as ebber you lib in dis worl' '*tis she!*" exclaimed the old woman in a voice of deep horror.

"Nonsense! it was imagination, optical illusion, no

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doubt," replied Susan, whose superstitious terrors had disappeared with the shadows of night, and whose right reason had returned with daylight.

"Don't matter what you call it, child,—wedder 'magination, optional solusion, or ghos'—it's all one and de same thing, and I rudder see a live lion o a robber, nor one o' *dem*. Has you any browned coffee?"

"No; I will get you to brown some," said Susan, going to a hamper and taking out a packet, which she handed to her assistant.

Then leaving the old woman to her task, Susan once more visited the room of her mistress, whom she now found awake.

"Have I disturbed you, by coming in, my lady?"

"No, dear girl, I am about to rise."

"Did you sleep well, Madam?"

"As usual, Susan."

"Nothing disturbed you in the night, I hope, my lady?"

"Nothing, Susan."

"No, of course not, *her* windows have shutters to them, and are, besides, on the opposite side of the house to the grave-yard," thought Susan, with a momentary relapse into credulity.

But her mistress was now rising, and Susan busied herself in assisting at her toilet.

Mary Queen of Scotts has been criticised for dressing as carefully each day, in her prison of Fotheringay, as at her palace of Holyrood. I have no doubt that it was a mere mechanical matter of habit, rather than of care or thought. Certainly it was only from force of habit that Lady Montressor, in the course of her simple matinal toilet, seated herself in a chair and yielded up her beautiful head of ebon hair, to be carefully dressed by her maid, whose affectionate hands braided up the back locks and rolled them in as neat a knot, and divided and disposed the front locks in as beau-

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tiful ringlets, as if, instead of hiding in this half ruined nouse, her ladyship had been going to receive morning visitors, in her boudoir of Montressor Castle. And with the same careful attention, she arranged the black cashmere morning dress, with its white lace collar and cuffs.

And then, as was her custom, she left the lady to her devotions, and passed into the parlor to open the shutters, light the fire, and set the solitary table for her morning meal.

Then she returned to the kitchen, where she found that the old busybody there had set the coffee, made biscuits and put them to bake, and was now engaged in preparing a fat partridge for the gridiron.

"Dear me! where did that quail come from?" asked Susan, in surprise and delight that this luxury was provided for her lady's table.

"Dunno what you call *quail*, but if you mean dis ere *peertridge*, better ax my old man dere, honey; he kin handle a gun now et a hunner year ole, good as any young feller going', I tell yer all good; you hears me, don't you?" replied the old woman, proudly and fondly rolling her head toward the back door, whither now Susan directed her eyes to see old Neptune standing there, leaning on his fowling-piece, and smiling meekly as was his wont.

The old man took off his hat and handkerchief, and bowed with his usual gentle salute of—

"Sarvint, Mist'ess."

"Good-morning, father—you brought these?"

"Yes, Mist'ess—I trought how de Madam, looking delikky, would like somethin' relishing for her breakfas'."

"I'll tell her you brought it; you are so very good. I am sure she will value your kindness."

"'Taint nuffin much, Mist'ess; wish I could do more for de Madam; she do look *wonderful* delikky."

And the old creature spoke sincerely; such an instance

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of thoughtful kindness was nothing unusual in his or his race; for there is not on all the earth, perhaps, a set of creatures more "kindly affectionate" than the old family servants of Maryland.

This old man seemed delighted with the pleasure he had given, and setting down his gun, went and busied himself with chopping and piling up wood, and making himself "generally useful."

"Now, Mist'ess," he said, "you has wood enough to las' you all day."

"I am very much obliged to you, indeed. But I am not *Mistress*," said Susan, smiling.

"What shall I call you, then, honey?"

"My name is Susan Copsewood, and I am only Lady Mont—— Gemini!—I mean Mrs. Estel's maid. So you may call me any thing you please except Mistress."

"Yes, Miss Susan," replied the old man, mildly.

"Aye! that will do very well. Call me that, father."

The old creature smiled; he was delighted to hear this rosy-cheeked, pleasant-spoken girl continue to call him father—not knowing that it was a title of respect Susan was in the habit of giving to very old men, of an humble class of life, in her native country.

As the breakfast was now ready, this "neat-handed" maid arranged it carefully upon a waiter and carried it into the parlor, where she found her mistress seated at the table in her old attitude of mournful abstraction.

Susan arranged the service upon the table and then, with the purpose of engaging her mistress in conversation, said, triumphantly—

"There, my lady! look at that quail!"

"Thank you, Susan," answered the lady, abstractedly.

"But you don't look at it—you don't ask where it came from."

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Lady Montressor made no comment, and Susan slightly piqued, observed:

"Oh, to be sure, we are in the fabulous country, where quails fly in at the kitchen windows, already roasted?"

"My dear girl, what has vexed you?" inquired her ladyship, kindly, noticing now, for the first time, that her faithful attendant looked troubled.

"Nothing, my dear lady, only that you have no more curiosity about this quail, which I consider a god-send, than if your father's gamekeeper had furnished it for the Hyde Hall breakfast table."

At this sudden mention of her old home, Lady Montressor grew pale as death, and Susan in alarm, hastened to apologize.

"No, no—say nothing, as you are not to blame, child."

There was a pause, and then Susan entreated her mistress to try and partake of some breakfast, and especially to try the "quail."

And Lady Montressor, rather to gratify the girl than to please herself, complied.

The idea of telling her mistress about the graveyard vision of the white-robed lady occurred to Susan; but she prudently dismissed the gloomy subject, and told instead the pleasant story of the old centennial sportsman, whose gun had supplied the game for breakfast.

Lady Montressor listened, and replied:

"Bear the old man my thanks, Susan, and do not let his efforts go unrewarded."

And Susan did as her mistress directed.

After breakfast, and after the young woman, with the assistance of Amphy, had put the lower rooms in order, and unpacked and disposed Lady Montressor's few books upon the parlor table—leaving her ladyship engaged in reading, she went up stairs and explored the upper rooms, which she found completely bare of furniture, and even of window glasses—the closed shutters concealing this latter named

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deficiency from the outside; the plastering was cracked, and hanging in dangerous masses from the ceiling; and the locks on the doors were all broken; but the floor, and all the wood and brick-work were perfectly sound.

From the second story, Susan went up into the attic, which she found in even a worse condition—the window-sashes being entirely gone, and not only the plastering, but the lathing broken. But here, also, the plank and brick-work was sound, although the deep stains on walls and floor proved that in rainy weather the roof leaked badly.

"Horridly out of repair, but a good, soundly-built house, for all that; and a few hundred dollars will make it a very comfortable one," was the conclusion to which Susan came.

She then went down stairs, and inquired of old Amphy how she might best reach the village of Eastville, to which she wished to go, to procure workmen to come out and repair the house.

Amphy assured her that the horse "Charley" and the carry-all, that had been left by Miss Barbary, in the old man's care, was at her service, and that the old man himself would be happy to drive her over there.

This plan was no sooner proposed than accepted, and Susan went in to inform her mistress of her projected journey.

She found Lady Montressor seated near the window, with the book held idly on her lap in one careless hand, while the other arm, resting its elbow on the window-sill, supported her drooping head. Susan proposed her errand, and received the lady's ready acquiescence.

Old Amphy promised, during the maid's absence, to mind the house, and to cook one of her own chickens for the lady's dinner; and old Neptune brought up the carry-all and horse to take Susan to the village. She prepared herself and soon set out.

She was absent several hours, but found it impossible to

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get any workmen to promise to come to the Headland House in less than a week or ten days. And with this insufficient satisfaction she was obliged to return home.

There was in the grove near the house a curious arbor, the work of Captain Brande, erected of six jaw bones of the whale, set up on end in a circular form, and covered with a thick growth of the trumpet vine with its shining, dark green, star-shaped leaves, and flaming red vase-like flowers.

As Susan drove into the park, she saw Lady Montressor sitting within that arbor, gazing out abstractedly upon the sea. Susan alighted and went up to her.

"The evening is chilly, dear lady, pray do not sit here," she urged, with affectionate solicitude.

The lady lifted her large mournful eyes to the face of her faithful attendant, and without a word arose to accompany her to the house.

Old Amphy had tea ready in the parlor, and soon after it was served and cleared away, Lady Montressor retired to her chamber and dismissed her attendant for the night.

Old Amphy complaining of fatigue from having set up later than usual upon the preceding night, took leave and departed.

Susan, also, from loss of rest, was very tired and sleepy, so she fastened up the house, put out the fire, said her prayers and went to bed. But with the darkness of solitude, and the silence, returned her superstitious terrors. She shut her eyes, and then, not content with that safegaurd against spectral sights, she drew the bed-clothes tightly over her head. But Susan had capacious lungs that required a good supply of fresh air, and so the sense of being half-suffocated grew so intolerable that she was forced to uncover her face for the purpose of breathing. But she kept her eyelids closed.

Good angels! how solitary, how silent, and how dark it

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was! She could not see the darkness, but like the silence and the solitude, she *felt* it, in the core of her heart, and quaked with vague terror.

It was long before she could quiet herself.

At last, however, she fell asleep.

How long she had slept she did not know, for sleepers take no account of time; and why she awoke, she could not tell, for dreamers are not always cognizant of causes;—but as she awoke, she thoughtlessly opened her eyes, turned over, faced the uncurtained window, and saw the half-obscured, star-lighted sky, the level table-land with its sentinel trees—the graveyard, with its gleaming spectral-like tombstones, and there—oh, Heaven of Heavens!—the gliding form of the graceful, white-robed woman!

The panic-stricken girl had no power to withdraw her gaze, that seemed fascinated to that beautiful form, with its flowing, snowy drapery, and streaming jet-black hair, and long fair hands that she clasped and wrung like one in deepest grief, as in slow measured steps she paced up and down. Presently, in turning away from her monotonous path, to Susan's unutterable horror, she slowly and steadily approached her window!

Just as that wild white face looked in from the outer darkness, Susan, half swooning, sunk back upon her pillow, with barely strength enough left to draw the counterpane over her swimming head; and there she lay half paralyzed with terror, her heart quivering, almost dying in her bosom with the momentary expectation of some supernatural denouement, until at length, as before, the deathly sense of suffocation, and the imminent necessity of breathing, compelled her to uncover her face.

All was solitude, silence and darkness around her. The spectral face had disappeared from the window. Still, in deadly terror of its return, she closed her eyes and lay shivering. She would have given all that she possessed in the

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world for the companionship of any human being. Yet in affectionate solicitude for the uninterrupted repose of her suffering mistress, she refrained from flying for shelter into the chamber of the latter.

And so she lay cowering and shuddering, occasionally lifting her eyelids a little way, to steal a cautious glance around the room and through the window; but all continued silent, dark and solitary, until near morning, when the joyous crowing of Aunt Amphy's chickens, and the cheerful red streaks along the eastern horizon, heralding the approach of day, put her superstitious, midnight terrors to flight, and enabled her wearied frame to sink to sleep.

She must have slept long and heavily, when a sharp tapping upon the pane of glass nearest her ear caused her to start up in affright.

It was now very late in the morning, and Aunt Amphy stood outside, tapping on the window.

"Marster's dear sake, chile, *is* you dead, or is yer gwine sleep for eber?"

"Oh! is that you, Mother Amphy?"

"Sure it's me, an' its gwine on to seven o'clock, chile.

"Oh, is it? I will get up directly and let you in," said Susan, rising and hurrying on her clothes.

"*Dar*, what you tink of *dat* for your Mist'ess' breakfas?" inquired the old woman, triumphantly holding up a fine fat "red neck" before the window.

"What sort of a bird do you call *that?*" asked Susan.

"Bird? De Lor! Dis ain't no *bird* chile! It is one of the bestest ducks 'cept de canwas back as flies over our waters. It's a red-neck, an' my ole darlin' shoot him dis mornin' for de chile's breakfas'."

"Why, your old man is the best of gamekeeper's. My lady must reward him handsomely. He certainly is the very best of gamekeepers."

"Lor' bless yer soul, honey, no he ain't! De dear ole

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angel, he never was no gamekeeper! De darlin' ole creeter is too free-hearted to keep any thing, much less game, when dat delikky chile in dere might want it for her breakfas'."

"Oh! you have mistaken my meaning, but I will tell you all about it," said Susan, as she went around to the back door to admit the kind-hearted old woman.

And that morning, while old Amphy picked the red-neck and dressed it for breakfast, Susan let her into some of the mysteries of the game laws as they existed in the "old country."

Whereupon, the namesake of the Ocean Queen expressed her astonishment and indignation "Dat any lords an' ladies should 'sume for to 'nopolize de Lord's free, wild creeturs as was ev'dently 'tended for de good of all, bofe black an' white; and she thank de Lord, *she* did, as she lived in a free country, where no sich divilments 'vailed!"

Susan laughed gayly at the old woman's excitement, and then soothed her by praising her zeal, and skill in cooking.

This day passed much as the preceding one had done. Susan, in generous self-control, refrained from disturbing her mistress with the gloomy story of the apparition in the graveyard, and which now, in daylight, she tried to persuade herself to have been only the effect of imagination. She determined, however, not to leave her window bare and exposed to the visits of such a frightful spectre, however it might have been conjured up; so she took the skirt of a long green merino riding-dress, and manufactured a thick curtain, which she hung up at the window beside her bed.

Consequently, that night, if the ghost walked in the graveyard, Susan did not know it; by diligently saying over her prayers, she fell asleep, and her rest remained undisturbed.

Nor was she again troubled with ghostly visions up to the night previous to the arrival of Barbara Brande's vessel.

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CHAPTER XX.

LORD MONTRESSOR'S ARRIVAL.

"Oh! had we never, never met,
Or, would this heart e'en now forget,
How linked how blest we might have been
Had fate not frowned so dark between!"—*Moore.*

"THAT was a glorious morning, as I said, in the golden month of October. Susan had risen very early, and was already in the kitchen when Amphy arrived. The face of the old creature was all aglow as she entered, exclaiming:

"Mornin' to yer, honey! Mornin'!"

"Why, mother Amphy, you look as overjoyed as if somebody had left you a fortune!" said Susan.

"Better an' dat, honey; please my Heabenly Marster, it is, chile; better 'an dat. Miss Barbara 'riv'—come out'n here an' let me show you a beautiful sight!"

Susan followed her through the hall and out at the front door, where the stopped and stood upon the old rickety porch, while Amphy pointed out at sea, exclaiming:

"Dar; what you tink o' *dat*?"

Susan's glance followed the direction of the black finger, and lighted upon a pretty craft, anchored off the Headland.

"Dar, what you say *now!* don't she look like a white swan, dough, a sittin' on de water! dat Miss Barbara's vessel," cried Amphy exultingly.

"But, how do you know it is Miss Barbara's?" asked Susan.

"How I know? De Lor! how I know any thing? by

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the quincequonces, caze no oder wessel any call to anker here 'cept 'tis de Brande's."

And she was right; for even while she spoke, a boat was lowered from the vessel, entered by a party, and rowed rapidly toward the beach below the Headland.

"Dar, now; ole as my eyes is, I can see dat's Miss Barbara in de starn, and dat boy's little Marser Edwy, and dem der oarsmen is our own sonnies.—But who de debbil dat sponshous lookin' gemman as Miss Barbara's got long o' her? Honey, you look, you's got younger eyes nor me."

Susan looked, and with astonishment and affright turned away.

"Why, what de mischief de matter wid you, honey?"

"I'm cold," said Susan, shortly turning into the house.

She had seen Lord Montressor in the boat. Lord Montressor was approaching the shore!

She went immediately to her mistress's door and listened. All was silent in that chamber. She turned the latch and entered softly.

Lady Montressor was lying—with her arms thrown up over her head, and her black hair escaped from her little lace cap, and flowing over the pillow—in that deep and heavy sleep, that in the morning often visits the mourner, who has waked and wept all night.

"I will not call her, trouble will come soon enough. That emperor was a fool who directed his courtiers never to wake him unless it was to hear bad news. Bad news is always too fast in traveling—we needn't hurry to meet it. Though why the intelligence of Lord Montressor's arrival should be considered bad news, I do not know," thought Susan, as she went to her own room to "smarten" herself up. After putting on her little cap and silk apron, she went out into the hall, expecting that by this time the party from the boat had landed.

She was correct—the party were ascending the bluff;

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out, arrived at its summit they paused and talked a few moments, and then separated.

Lord Montressor, attended by the boy Edwy, and followed by his groom with the guns and game-bags, took the narrow path leading into the deep woods toward Neptune's cabin. And Barbara Brande, attended by young Nep, came up toward the house.

Old Amphy, who was impatiently watching for her approach, now set off in a run to meet her. At any other time Susan might have been convulsed with laughter, at seeing this aged octogenarian trotting off, with her head thrown back, her elbows acute, and every step showing the whole broad sole of her shoeless foot.

It was a pleasant sight to see Barbara's handsome, ruddy countenance, break into a cordial smile of greeting as she put out both her hands to grasp those of her affectionate old servant.

Then they came on talking together till they reached the dilapidated porch where Susan stood waiting.

"How do you do, Susan? I hope your lady is well," said Barbara, kindly offering her hand to the girl.

"My lady is just about as well as usual, Ma'am; but I don't know as it would be quite convenient to her ladyship to receive visitors—especially gentlemen," replied Susan, who, however unjustly and unreasonably, seemed to consider Miss Brande a sort of traitress in having sprung Lord Montressor upon the Headland.

"Nevertheless, I think she will not be displeased to see me," said Barbara, good humoredly. "Let her know that I have come, my girl."

"She is not yet risen, Ma'am, or even awake."

"True, indeed, I had not reflected that it is yet very early. Well, my girl, your lady expects me, will you let me pass into the house?"

"Oh! I beg your pardon, Ma'am!" exclaimed Susan

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blushing at the unconscious rudeness of which she had been guilty, and springing aside to let Miss Brande pass.

"Susan, come with me, my girl. A part of my business here is to open some secret closets that you would never find out, and offer their contents—stores of West India sweetmeats, pickles, spices, cordials and so on—to your mistress, if she will favor me by accepting them. And I had rather deliver them up to you, now, while she sleeps and you are at leisure, for when she wakes I presume she will require your attendance at her toilet, and after she is dressed, she will probably wish to see me," said Barbara, leading the way into the parlor.

"Decidedly," thought Susan, "my lady had little need to draw her funds from the banker's. These savages here will support her! The black ones furnish game, and the white ones supply the sweetmeats. In fact, I begin to like these barbarians," she concluded, as she followed Miss Brande into the parlor.

Barbara went to the side of the fireplace, touched a spring, and what seemed an oak panel, flew open, revealing one of those deep, hidden closets, so frequently found in old-fashioned country houses, and whose shelves were here laden with rows above rows, of canisters, jars, and bottles, all filled with imported luxuries, and hermetically sealed.

"Here! this cupboard contains the sweetmeats and cordials," said Barbara, taking out a tin canister and a bottle which she placed upon a chair, and before reclosing the panel.

Then she went to the other side of the mantel-piece, and opened a corresponding closet similarly furnished.

"This one contains the potted, spiced meats and the pickles," she said, taking down two jars and placing them on the chair beside the bottle and the canister, and then shutting the panel, she turned to Susan and said—

"The contents of these cupboards are most freely at

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your lady's service, if she will accept them; and now you know the secret of opening the doors."

"Decidedly I *do* like these barbarians," thought Susan. Then aloud she answered—

"I thank you very much, indeed, Miss Brande. There is my mistress's bell! I must go to her. Pray make yourself at home, Miss Brande. My mistress, I know, will be very happy to see *you;* and breakfast will be ready in a short time."

"I thank you, I breakfasted on board the vessel. Don't let me detain you from Mrs. Estel."

"'*Mrs. Estel!*' She still calls her 'Mrs. Estel!' I wonder if she is in ignorance that my lady bears another name!" thought Susan, whose mind was still in the deepest perplexity. But before she could satisfy herself upon the point, she was startled by the second ringing of her lady's bell, and hurried away to obey its summons.

Barbara Brande called in her old servant, Amphy, who had been lingering in the hall, and scolded her for going bare-footed in the middle of October.

"De Lor! Miss Barbra, chile, I likes to have my fut *cool* on de soft groun'."

"Yes, your foot will be cool *in* the soft ground, if you go on so," said Barbara.

"I gwine *stop* of it, honey, 'deed I is."

"If yon *don't* it will stop *you*—that's all. Now here—here are some goodies to comfort you and your old man these coming winter evenings," said Miss Brande, giving her the canister, bottle and jars. And in the boat below, you will find some winter clothing and some flannels rolled up together."

"Yes, honey—yes. Yes, chile, many thanks to you; and I'll tend to it."

"Where is the old man?"

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"Gone down to de boat to see de boys, chile! 'Deed is de ole angel, honey!"

Meanwhile Susan had passed into Lady Montressor's room.

"Susan, my girl, whose voice was that I heard in the parlor?" said her ladyship.

"Miss Barbara Brande's, my lady."

"Ah! she has come, then?"

"Yes, my lady, this morning at sunrise."

"I believe I will rise, Susan, for I shall be glad to see Miss Brande."

"Yes, Madam," replied Susan, so gravely that Lady Montressor looked at her, and observing for the first time her troubled expression of countenance, exclaimed—

"Why, Susan, what is the matter with you, my girl?"

"Miss Barbara did not come *alone*, my lady!"

"Miss Barbara did not come alone? Well, I really do not suppose she did—but what of that?"

"A great deal, dear lady."

"Good Heavens! Susan, what do you mean?"

"Dear Lady Montressor, did the possibility never occur to you, that he who traced us from Exeter to Baltimore, might even trace us from Baltimore here?"

"Oh! no, no, no. Oh! Heaven of Heavens, no! Do not say that, Susan! Do not tell me that Lord Montressor has followed us hither?" exclaimed the lady in an extremity of distress.

"I wish, dear Madam, that I could say so; but that wouldn't alter the facts; his lordship landed with Miss Brande this morning."

"Oh, fate, fate! Oh, fate, fate!" cried Lady Montressor, wringing her hands.

"Yes, fate! it is just fate! and it is no use to struggle against it, dear lady! I would not try if I were you! I would just yield!" exclaimed Susan, who could never be

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brought to relinquish the hope that her lady might be persuaded to return to England, and to all the fancied advantages of her social position.

"Be silent on that subject, Susan. Oh, angels in Heaven, how shall I meet this new demand on my firmness! Susan, where is his lordship?"

"That is the wonderful part of it, my lady! I could easily guess that he might have followed us here, but that after landing, without coming near the house, he should take his servant and his guns, and go off to the woods for a day's shooting, is what I cannot comprehend at all."

"And it is what his lordship would never do, if he knew of our presence, and had followed us hither! There is more mystery here, Susan! It is just possible that he has *not* followed us—yet, even in that case, it is scarcely possible that he can escape discovering us."

"Ah! my dear lady, if he does not yet know of your presence here, it would be very easy to conceal ourselves from his knowledge, except for one thing."

"And what is that?"

"Your name, dear lady—your name! Mrs. Estel! Ah! if you had only called yourself Mrs. Thompson or Mrs. Smith!"

"Ah, but my girl, neither of these names was mine; while that by which I am known is my baptismal name, and the only one, that I am certain of having a claim upon, and the only one that in wearing, I shall do no injury to another!" said the lady, mournfully.

Susan sighed, and looked into that troubled countenance with the wish—with the prayer that she herself could only bear a portion of her lady's burden of sorrow.

"Assist me to rise, my girl, and hand me my dressing-gown and slippers. There! thank you. Now go and give my respects to Miss Brande, and request her to come

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nither," said Lady Montressor, as she slipped on her morning-gown, put her feet in her shoes, and sank into the one plain arm-chair.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LAST STRUGGLE.

"One struggle more, and I am free
From pangs that rend my heart in twain;
One long, last sigh to love and thee,
Then back to dreary life again."—*Byron.*

As soon as Susan had closed the door behind her, Lady Montressor dropped her face into her hands, and sigh after sigh, and groan after groan, burst from her overcharged bosom.

"Oh, Montressor! Oh! my lord! my dear lord! Oh, woe is me! that I must put far away from my parched lips this draught of joy that would be as the waters of life to my thirsting and famished soul! Oh, woe is me, Lord Montressor, that I must deceive and wound your loving, trusting nature! that I must turn from the light, and life, and warmth you bring me, and bury myself alive in the darkness and coldness of this my living grave! for how long, great Heaven! for how long! I am so young—I shall live so many years! how shall I bear this living death, oh, spirits in Heaven, how shall I bear it! Will my heart break? Will my brain turn? Will death come and end my anguish? I cannot tell! I do not know! but better any fate! any suffering for me, than that reproach should come to your noble name, my lord! And after all—in my bitter, bitter cup—there is a single sweet drop! the thought that I suffer for you, my lord—that I suffer for you, even as I would die

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for you! Yet if I could see you but for one moment to-day! could feel my poor hand clasped in your dear hand for one instant! could meet one glance of your eyes—what life—what life would thrill again to my dying heart! Oh! heart be still! be strong! this must not be! we must not meet again! Oh, heart! learn the heroism of silent endurance!" While she thus lamented and struggled with herself, there was a rap at the chamber door.

"Now I shall hear of him"—she said, as with a supreme effort she controlled her emotion, steadied her voice, and bade the rapper "Come in."

Barbara Brande opened the door and entered. But the traces of extreme suffering were still so strongly marked upon Lady Montressor's fine countenance, that Babara, in stead of the smiling greeting she had been about to offer started back in alarm, exclaiming,

"Good Heavens, Mrs. Estel, are you ill?"

"Yes—and no, Miss Brande! Come in and close the door, for I wish to speak with you—confidentially."

Barbara in perplexity obeyed.

"Draw your chair close beside me, if you please, Miss Brande, for I must speak low."

Barbara feeling more and more embarrassed, complied.

"Do you know, Miss Brande, that I regret exceedingly not having given you my full confidence before leaving Baltimore?"

"I should have felt honored in your confidence, Madam," said Barbara with increasing surprise.

"At least you would have justified it, no doubt."

"I should not have been undeserving of your faith, Mrs. Estel."

"I am sure of it! But I am called by another name besides Estel."

"Madam!"

"Do not look, or speak in this way, my dear Miss —

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Brande, or you will repel the confidence I wish so much to give you," said Lady Montressor, in a voice, and with a look of such hopeless misery, that Barbara's heart was touched, and she said very gently—

"Speak, then, Madam; I will not be unworthy of your confidence! Your name you said was not Estel."

"No—I said that I was called by another name besides that. Estel is *really* my name, else I should not certainly have called myself by it; but it is my baptismal—not my surname. I am known in the world as the Viscountess Montressor."

"The Viscountess Montressor! Good Heaven!" exclaimed Barbara, in amazement.

"And you did not suspect this?"

"No, Madam, by my sacred honor, I did not."

"And yet, he who conferred upon me his name and title, was your passenger to this place, landed here with you this morning?"

"That is very true, Madam. Lord Montressor engaged passage for himself and two servants, in my vessel, for Havana, and his lordship came ashore this morning for a day's sport in the woods—that is all that I know! I am completely mystified, my lady," said Miss Brande, in augmented astonishment.

"Do you think, Miss Brande," inquired Lady Montressor, with a look of deep interest, "that his lordship knows or suspects the identity of the party to whom you have let your house?"

"I do not know, Madam, since it is not impossible that *he*, also, may have concealed something from me; but I should judge from appearances that he knew nothing of your ladyship's presence in the neighborhood."

"Forgive the necessity that compels me to question you, Miss Brande, and pray tell me, did you ever mention to his lordship the name of the lessee of your property?"

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"No, Madam, I never did."

"Then I will beseech you never to do it; for, if once Lord Montressor heard the name of 'Estel,' it would furnish him with the only clue he needs to my identity and retreat."

"Forgive me, in your turn, dear lady, but all this is very inexplicable!"

"Ah! it is so, indeed, to you! And I appear to invite your faith, without giving you my confidence! Is it not so? Well! I will explain! and you, if you will have patience, will hear a sorrowful story. But, first," said Lady Montressor, even in this anxious hour considerate of the convenience of others, "have you breakfasted?"

"Yes, Madam."

"And can you give me half an hour?"

"I am at Lady Montressor's service for half the day, if she will command me," said Barbara, who felt her heart painfully attracted to her interesting tenant.

"Listen, then, Miss Brande! Do you ever see the English papers?"

"Seldom, or never, my lady."

"Then you have seen no account of a wretched English woman of rank, who was struck in her pride of place—struck at her highest culmination of fortune and happiness—struck down, down, down, to a bottomless pit of black dishonor and despair! You have heard of no such woman?"

"No, no, no; Great Heaven, no!" exclaimed Barbara, shuddering.

"Look at her, then, Miss Brande. She stands before you," said Lady Montressor, rising, and fixing her eyes upon the shocked face of Barbara.

"No, no, no; Heaven of Heavens, no! You would not have been that guilty one, my lady," exclaimed Barbara, covering her face with her hands, to shut out the sight of

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that pale and spectral countenance, and those gleaming black eyes, that seemed to consume those upon whom they looked.

"I said a *wretched*, not a guilty woman. Are wretchedness and guilt synonymous? If so, then, indeed, am I a very guilty, being a very wretched woman," said Lady Montressor, in a thrilling, impassioned voice.

"Pardon me, my lady, if I have not understood you," replied Barbara, with emotion.

"How should you, indeed, until you hear. Attend, then, Miss Brande, and I will tell you my story," said the lady, sinking again into her seat.

And while Barbara Brande heard with painful interest, Lady Montressor related the tragic history of her two marriages, and ended by declaring the motives that had induced her to withdraw herself from Lord Montressor's knowledge.

Barbara listened with a face often streaming with tears, and when she had heard all, she took the lady's wasted hand and said—

"He weighs nothing in the balance of his love for you?"

"Nothing."

"Neither rank, nor wealth, nor fame?"

"No; alas, no!"

"He stood nobly by you in your trial?"

"He did, he did; my dear and honored lord! he did!"

"He followed you across the ocean?"

"Yes, yes."

"And he is still in pursuit of you?"

"He is. Oh, he is."

"Then, Lady Montressor, how can you still elude him? The man who claimed you, even had his claim been ever so just, is now no more; there is not the shadow of a reason why you should fly so faithful a friend as Lord Montressor has shown himself to be."

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"His honor, Miss Brande. His honor should forbid him to mate with one so wretched as myself!"

"A man's honor, my lady, is, according to my judgment, in his own exclusive keeping, and cannot be injured by anything but guilt or folly."

"But the honor of the woman, with whom Lord Montressor mates, should be like that of Cæsar's wife, 'not only pure, but unsuspected,'" said the lady. "Therefore have I withdrawn myself from him and renounced his name. Therefore, though my heart should break, my brain madden, or my life go down to death in the pain of this continued effort—will I conceal myself from his pursuit; until worn out with waiting and with searching, he shall at last repudiate and forget me."

"And you can coolly resolve to drive him to that?" exclaimed Barbara.

"*Coolly?* Miss Brande? Oh, look at me and say if you think I do this coolly! No, no; no, no! but he must be constrained to have that fatal ceremony that passed between us at the parish church at Hyde, annulled by Parliament. And he must ally himself to some lady—his equal in position and of unblemished honor."

"Lady Montressor, if I have read his lordship's character aright, he can never do that."

"He can and must! he owes it to his family, to his position, to his rising fame!"

"Lady Montressor, you also are influenced by a worldly education. You have all the prejudices of caste. You think entirely too much of 'family,' 'position,' and 'fame,' more than Lord Montressor does by half. I tell you, that next to *duty*, 'love is the greatest good in the world,' and Lord Montressor knows it. Oh, Madam, how can you disregard the great love he bears you?" said Barbara, pleadingly.

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"*I* disregard it—oh, Heaven!" exclaimed the lady, growing paler than before.

"I see you do not really do so! I see the struggle in your mind! Oh, Madam, yield to your simpler and better nature! Make him and yourself happy! Come, let me send into the forest and bring him here to plead his own cause!" prayed Barbara, with earnest eloquence.

"Miss Brande, no! if you would not have me die before you—no! You do not know what you ask. You do not appreciate to how much of humiliation an alliance with me would subject him at home! You do not know England."

"Then *what* can I do for you? And why have you uselessly harrowed me with this terrible story?" demanded Barbara, more in sorrow than in anger at what her simple, honest, straightforward nature looked upon as the unnecessary self-torturing of a morbid fastidiousness.

"Not to distress you, needlessly, Miss Brande; but since Lord Montressor has not yet discovered the clue to my retreat, to beseech your assistance in still concealing it from him. And this assistance that I pray is only of a negative character, only your forbearance, only that you refrain from mentioning in his presence the name of your tenant. Miss Brande, will you oblige me in this matter?"

"I will be guided by your wishes, Lady Montressor."

"Another thing I must entreat—that you will never call me again 'Lady Montressor;' nor think of me as the wife of Lord Montressor. It is a name and a position that I have renounced. Nay, that I am not even sure that I ever had a just right to wear! For, look you, when I left England the question of the legality of my childish marriage was still pending before the Spiritual Court of Arches. And law is such an uncertain thing, you know, that the decision of the bench of Bishops may have been different and quite opposite to that opinion advanced by the first lawyer of the day, Lord Dazzleright, who denied

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the validity of the first marriage, and affirmed the legality of the second. Therefore, you perceive that the only name to which I feel sure of possessing an unquestioned claim, is that one bestowed upon me in baptism, and which marriage does not change—Estelle—call me Mrs. Estel."

"I will do so, since you wish it, Madam. May God comfort you and guide you through your very trying path, for I begin to see now that *in one respect* you are right," said Barbara, with earnestness, "for as long as there exists the slightest question of the perfect legality of that ceremony that passed between yourself and his lordship, you can as a Christian do no otherwise than reserve yourself—Baron Dazzleright and Parson Oldfield to the contrary notwithstanding. Upon this subject, a pure-hearted woman's instinct is worth all the legal opinions and theological dogmas in the world. You are right, dear lady, and in your painful adherence to right I see the brightest hope of your coming years."

"Aye, of my life in another state of existence; and that seems to hearts—yearning hearts of flesh—so distant and so vague!"

"No; I spoke of your coming years in this world. 'Godliness is profitable unto all things—having the promise of the life that NOW IS as well as of that which is to come.' Wait patiently for the Lord—He can lift you out of this 'horrible pit,' this 'miry clay,' and set your 'feet upon a rock.'"

There was something in the strong, earnest, cheerful faith of this noble girl, who had herself received so terrible a shock, that cheered and strengthened and inspired the mourning woman to whom she spoke.

Estelle had always had strength to *suffer*, but now the cordial clasp of Barbara's hand, the earnest tones of her voice, the cheerful confidence of her promise, gave the sufferer strength to *hope*.

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Feeling now that she would best serve Lady Montressor by withdrawing and leaving her to take repose or refreshment, Barbara, renewing her promises to keep Lord Montressor away from the house, took leave.

Estelle sank upon her knees beside the bed, and burying her face in the bed-clothes, prayed.

Presently Susan came in with breakfast, which she inferred that her lady would choose upon this morning to have served in her chamber.

At Susan's earnest entreaty, Lady Montressor compelled herself to swallow a little coffee and a morsel of bread and jelly, and then pushed the waiter from her sight, and turned away.

"Close the front door; keep the house dark and quiet. I will, after awhile, go into the front parlor and sit by the window, where, without being seen, I may look out upon the sea," said the lady, as she dismissed her attendant.

What a long, weary, trying day!

Barbara Brande went over the house and over the grounds, in consultation with Lady Montressor's maid upon various matters relating to repairs and alterations that required their mutual care.

Lord Montressor, accompanied by little Edwy, and attended by his groom with the dogs and guns, roamed far and wide through the woods behind the Headland.

Estelle, having locked the parlor doors, sat at the front window, and, shielded from outside view by the closed Venetian blinds, gazed through their slats, watching the sea-coast, if haply she could catch one glimpse of the "one loved form." How long and patiently she sat and waited for that single transient moment of painful joy! As the day waned, and the sun declined, and the lights and shadows changed, she sank into a kneeling posture before the window, and with her clasped hands resting upon its sill, and her chin leaned upon them, she continued to gaze

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through the bars out upon the darkening coast and upon the sea, still bright in the reflection of the last rays of the setting sun.

At length, just as she was beginning to fear that she should not see him before the evening grew too dark for her to identify his form, her patience was rewarded.

A party emerged from the woods off to her right, and foremost among them she recognized his well-known, commanding form, clothed in a hunting-suit of green, with the game-bag at his side, the fowling-piece across his shoulder, and two pointers at his feet. Behind him came the boy, the old negro, and the groom, all heavily laden with game. He paused upon the same spot, whereon in the morning he had parted with his shipmates, he paused and turned his fine face toward the house—toward the very window whereat she knelt and gazed!

Oh! could he but have known who watched behind those green blinds!—but evidently he knew not—suspected not the near proximity of her whom he so eagerly sought, and who at this very moment, from behind those blinds, gazed upon him in such passionate love and prayerful sorrow.

He called the old negro to his side, and selecting what seemed to be the best specimens from each bunch of game, tied them together, put them in the hands of Neptune, and pointed toward the house.

Old Neptune touched his hat, and turned to come up the hill.

And Lord Montressor continued his course down the steep, until he was lost to her sight.

Then her strength utterly gave way!

"It is over! it is over!" she cried, and sank swooning to the floor.

When she recovered her consciousness it was quite dark—recollection slowly returned, bringing its accompaniment of anguish. She arose upon her elbow, passed her hand

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before her face to put away the trailing black tresses of her hair, and looked around.

The moonlight gleaming through the slats of the closed shutters was the only object that attracted her attention. She went and opened them and sank down on the floor with her head resting as before upon the window-sill, gazing out at sea.

There, on the moonlit waters, like some fair white-winged bird, floated the vessel that contained all she loved on earth. She could not choose but kneel there with her breaking heart, praying for him, gazing after him.

She was interrupted by a gentle rap at the door—not of the parlor, but of the chamber. She arose and feebly crossed both rooms, and laid her hand upon the latch just as the voice of Susan spoke softly—

"Are you awake, dear lady?"

For reply, she opened the door and admitted her attendant.

"Dear Madam, how long and soundly you must have slept! Here I have been to the door three times since sunset, and found all quiet," said the girl, who had no suspicion that her mistress had lain an hour in a swoon.

As Lady Montressor made no comment, Susan said—

"Miss Brande is in the hall waiting to bid you good-by, my lady, as she returns on board of her vessel to-night."

"Ask her to come in," said Estelle, in a voice so hollow that Susan started with the impression that it was the graveyard spectre that spoke close to her ear.

Recovering her self-possession, she went out to obey, and soon returned, bringing lights, and preceding Miss Brande. Susan set the lights down, handed a chair to the visitor, and retired.

"You have seen him this evening, Miss Brande?"

"No, dear lady, I have not. He remained in the forest until sunset, when he returned and went immediately on

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board of the ship. I have been on the premises here all day, and so have not seen him."

"I think we may be sure now that I am safe from discovery."

"Yes, Madam, for he evinces no curiosity about my lady tenant, although, having been engaged in shooting through her woods, he has very properly sent her a fine bunch of game. Old Neptune brought it."

As Barbara had only come to say "Good-bye," and as she was in haste to return to her vessel, she took leave of Lady Montressor, and with sincere prayers for her consolation and happiness, prepared to depart. She had not gone many steps from the room, however, before the plaintive voice of the lady recalled her.

"Miss Brande, forgive me, but at what hour do you sail?"

"At sunrise, to-morrow morning, Madame."

"Thank you. May Heaven send you a happy voyage."

"And you—peace and consolation, lady."

And so they parted.

That evening, Lady Montressor, scarcely having tasted her supper, soon dismissed her attendant, and closed herself up in her two rooms. And when the house was still, she went and sat at the window, looking out at sea, and watching the white sails of the vessel that bore within its bulwarks her beloved. Hour after hour she sat there, until the moon sank below the horizon, leaving the earth and sea in utter darkness.

Then she arose and paced the floor of that desolate room, hour after hour, until the dawn of morning faintly appeared in the east.

Then again she seated herself at the window, and with her head resting heavily upon her hand, she watched until the brightening day once more, for a few moments, gave the sails of the departing vessel to her longing eyes.

And she watched that vessel,—treasuring every moment

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that she might yet behold it—as we watch a beloved and dying face that we feel must soon vanish from our sight forever.

She watched it until she saw the sails shaken out of their reefs, and other sails hoisted, and all draw and fill with the wind as the Petrel left her anchorage and glided gracefully over the waters in her course down the Bay.

She watched it as the sails lessened in the distance; she watched it out of sight—straining her eyes after it until the Petrel appeared no larger than a snow-flake on the blue sea against the horizon, into which it soon seemed to melt and disappear.

It was gone! *He* was gone!

Yet still she did not change her attitude or withdraw her gaze; but remained with her strained eyes fixed upon the spot under the horizon where the sail had disappeared!

It was very late in the afternoon, and Susan had paid many visits to her lady's chamber door to listen if she could hear her stir, and had even rapped once or twice to attract her notice; when at length growing uneasy, she gently opened the door and looked in; seeing the bed unoccupied she became alarmed, entered the room and passed on to the parlor, where, at the front window, she saw her mistress sitting quite still, leaning her forehead against the window pane, and apparently gazing out upon the Bay.

"Why, dear Madam, how indiscreet! Have you been up all night?" inquired Susan, anxiously approaching the lady.

But the stationary figure neither spoke nor moved.

"Lady! Lady Montressor!" exclaimed the girl, going closer to her side.

But no word or gesture responded to that call.

"She has fallen asleep sitting there—she will get cold; she must be waked. Lady! Lady! dear Lady!" exclaimed Susan, taking the hand that hung down by her side.

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But that hand was a hand of ice.

"Good angels, how cold she is! Madam! dear Mistress! Oh Heavens! what ails her?" cried the girl, putting her arms gently and respectfully around the lady's shoulders, and seeking to lift her head.

At that touch the sufferer murmured strangely, wildly, vaguely.

"What is the matter? Dear Lady, what is this?" said Susan in great distress.

"Gone! gone! gone!" exclaimed Estelle in a hollow, echoing voice.

"Oh! you have been asleep—rouse yourself, dear lady! Wake up!"

"Gone! gone! gone!"

"Oh, Heaven! what ails her! What shall I do with her? Lady Montressor! speak to me! look on me! it is I—your poor, faithful Susan! Speak to me, please!"

"Gone! gone! gone!"

Once more Susan put her arms reverently around her mistress's shoulders and sought to lift her head.

And at that touch the lady turned toward her a death-like face, from which every shade of color had faded, and vacant eyes whence the light of intellect had gone out!

Yes! the heroic soul that had borne up so long, and bravely, and patiently, under such tremendous afflictions, had succumbed at length; the sorely over-tasked heart and brain had yielded; the light of reason had fled.

Meanwhile Lord Montressor, on board the Petrel, pursued his voyage to the West Indies. And, reader, this was well—this was best!

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CHAPTER XXII.

JULIUS LUXMORE.

"The gallant's form was middle size
For feats of strength, or exercise,
Shaped in proportion fair;
And hazel was his eagle eye,
And auburn of the darkest dye,
His short curl'd beard and hair.
Light was his footstep in the dance,
And firm his stirrup in the lists;
And oh! he had that merry glance
That seldom lady's heart resists."—*Scott.*

It is about time that we should looked up Mr. Julius Luxmore, whom we have too long left to his own "devices."

It will be recollected that after his rescue from death among the waves, the first thought that arose in the mind of that ingenious young gentleman was not the religious emotion of gratitude to Divine Providence for his almost miraculous preservation; but, on the contrary, the wicked impulse of suppressing his real name and giving a fictitious one.

For this act he had, as it was afterward discovered, a very strong motive.

Julius Luxmore, from his earliest youth, had been the subject of one grand passion—the love of money. How to make the largest possible fortune in the least possible time, was to him the constant subject of study. The love of money, as the love of any particular object of pursuit, is accompanied with an instinctive knowledge of the readiest road to its acquirement.

As early as his twelfth year commerce suggested itself to the intelligent lad as the quickest means by which to gain wealth.

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Thus, when in his fourteenth year, he was left a destitute and irresponsible orphan, without a near relative in the world, and with only one decent suit of clothes, and one guinea in his pocket, he applied to his neighbor, old Captain Brande, and was engaged as cabin-boy on board the Mercury.

It was on this first voyage, that he became acquainted with Barbara, the skipper's little daughter and constant companion.

Captain Brande was very kind to the fatherless and motherless lad who had sought his protection, and Barbara, to whom orphanage seemed the most appalling of all calamities, treated the boy as a dear brother.

It was the old skipper's delight, in his leisure moments, to instruct these children not only in the various branches of a common school education, but also in the science of navigation, and in the art of seamanship—and even in the long night watches he used sometimes, without too much taxing their hours of sleep, to teach them the names of the constellations and the stars.

He encouraged a generous spirit of emulation between the boy and girl, who could never in any one acquirement be quite equal; for Julius possessed the greater physical power, and Barbara the quicker intellect; therefore Julius excelled in the *practice*, and Barbara in the *theory* of working the ship. But the old skipper was not content that this should remain just so—and in giving his lessons he stimulated the mind of the boy to a greater activity; and in directing the firm little hand of the girl, he encouraged her to lay out her full strength upon the ropes.

This constant companionship of the youth and maiden was likely to result in one of two things—mutual dislike or mutual affection—it eventuated in the latter.

Their ship was bound to London. And on arriving at that port, Julius cast about in his mind the problem—

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how to invest his precious guinea to such advantage as finally to turn it into two guineas—for to double his money in every speculation was with the sanguine lad a fundamental principle of financiering.

An accident assisted him—accident *always* assists those who are sufficiently in earnest.

One day, in strolling along the narrow streets of Liverpool, he came to an auction where the goods of a dealer in Sheffield cultery were in process of sale. He stood awhile and watched the bidding, and then with his five dollars bought about twenty dollars' worth of morocco cases, each containing steel scissors, tweezers, penknife, bodkin, needle-case, thimble, netting and tatting shuttle, knitting-needles, and, in short, every possibly needful accessory of a lady's work-box. Having secured his prize, he took it on board the ship, where he concealed it until he got an opportunity of sewing it up in his mattress—for Julius had not the slightest intention of permitting the custom-house to share his profits.

On reaching Baltimore, these twenty cases, worth in England a dollar a piece, were easily retailed by the boy for two dollars. So that, in his very first venture, from an investment of five dollars he had cleared thirty-five, or seven hundred per cent.! Why, the thought almost took his breath! At this rate he should speedily make a fortune.

But Julius had to learn that, with all its advantages, commerce is a very uncertain vocation—that its great gains are often counter-balanced by as great losses. His next venture was not quite so lucky.

This first voyage of Julius was also the last one which Barbara accompanied her father. Her mother's declining health and subsequent death rendered it necessary that this eldest child should remain at home to take charge of the younger ones.

But Julius went to the West Indies with the skipper, and

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from that time accompanied him on all his voyages, and in a few years rose from the position of cabin-boy to that of mate.

His home on shore was always at the Headland, where Barbara received him with a sister's warm affection.

As the years passed, the youth and maiden grew in strength and beauty, and in mutual love.

Julius, notwithstanding the fluctuating nature of his business, had increased in riches, and was worth several thousand dollars upon the day when he first asked the hand of Barbara from her father.

Old Captain Brande gladly consented to a betrothal, with this stipulation—that the marriage should not be consummated until the end of the voyage upon which they were then bound, after which the mate, as Captain Luxmore, should have the command of the vessel, and the hand of the retired master's daughter.

Alas! we know how that promising voyage ended—in the wreck of the Mercury, with the loss of all on board except Julius Luxmore, who brought from the waves one wild hope connected with one wicked purpose. The circumstances in which he found himself placed on his restoration to life, formed the first terrible temptation to his integrity.

He saw himself the sole survivor of a shipwrecked crew, with none to identify his person. He found himself left guardian to a young girl of almost fabulous beauty and immense wealth, who had always lived a life of utter seclusion, on a lovely sea-girt island—her own patrimony—and having no companions except a half-crazy old man in his ninetieth year, and a troop of negro slaves, that, like the fair island, was her own inheritance.

"Princess," she had been called by her mad old uncle, but was *that* so mad a term, as applied to her, after all? Little Island Queen was she, rather—for, would not all the land, from its centre to its sea-washed shores, and all the people

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on it, belong absolutely to her?—to her, not only for government, but for bargain and sale, if she should will it? Truly, she would be "monarch of all she surveyed," and not with a limited, but with an absolute monarchy!

And this beautiful little millionaire, this little queen of eleven years of age, would, in four or five years, be legally marriageable.

What a rich prize would she be! It almost took the breath of the ambitious and avaricious young man to think of it!

He reflected. To wait five years, and then to marry her, would be the quickest, easiest, and surest way of securing an immense fortune. This lovely little Etoile—this radiant star of the sea—this young "Island Princess" had, as it appeared, never left her beautiful, solitary, sea-girt home, and had never seen any other human creatures than her mad old uncle and her negro or mulatto slaves. Good! He resolved that she should never see any other person, except himself—Julius Luxmore. He was quite conscious of possessing a handsome face and figure, with great powers of pleasing, and he determined to use his advantages to attach her affections to himself—and if that eventually failed, to use his power as her sole guardian to bring about a marriage with her, before he would ever consent to take her from the lone Isle.

To this plan her doting, old uncle could be no hindrance, as its consummation belonged to future years, while a few weeks or months must naturally terminate the life of a man of ninety, who had already fallen into second childhood. But it might be well to conciliate even this old lunatic, and to do this Julius Luxmore resolved.

There was one serious trouble in his way; it was not an obstacle, for Julius resolved that it should not be such; but it was a grief. It was the thought of Barbara Brande, whom, notwithstanding all his selfish ambition, he still loved—the thought of Barbara in her awful bereavement—of

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Barbara, the noble and true-hearted, now crushed down under an overwhelming weight of sorrow—and whom he should rather hasten to raise up, support and console—than deceive, betray and abandon—the thought of Barbara that would *not* be banished, but that made his heart intensely ache. For he was not old in sin, or hardened in guilt, this Julius Luxmore!—his ruling passion had been powerfully tempted, and had betrayed his integrity; he had sold his soul to the fiend and was resolved to do his work—that was all! and truly that was enough.

He knew that to Barbara's noble, truthful, and confiding nature the belief in his death would bring less of anguish than the knowledge of his falsehood—falsehood, the perfidy of which was so extremely aggravated under the circumstances of her tremendous calamities. He determined to permit Barbara to believe him dead; and for this reason gave a fictitious name, instead of his own.

It is true, he felt that this fraud might be discovered; but if it should be, he was resolved to shift all the responsibility upon others, by affirming that *they* had made a mistake in the name.

And to defer as long as possible any chance of being identified as Julius Luxmore, late mate of Captain Brande, he had, immediately on reaching the port of Baltimore, slipped out of sight and concealed himself.

He made his way to New York, and thence took a vessel bound down the coast. He landed at Norfolk—there purchased a small, clean schooner, and having manned it with negroes, set sail for the East, or Orient Isle.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

ETOILE L'ORIENT.

"She was all lightness, life and glee!
One of the shapes we seem
To meet in visions of the night;
But should they greet our waking sight,
Imagine that we dream."—*George Hill.*

It was the afternoon of a warm, refulgent day in October that Julius Luxmore came in sight of the loveliest of Isles. It lay like some jewel of rich mosaic on the heaving bosom of the bay. The girdle of woods, that skirted its shores were just beginning to turn, and on the northern and western side were tinged with a ruddy, crimson color; the low, descending sun, striking full upon this hue kindled it up into a flame-like refulgence,—a glorious, indestructible conflagration. Contrasting with this was the green of the grass and shrubberies in the interior of the Isle, that still retained its spring-like verdure. Central in this oasis of verdancy and bloom, stood the white buildings of the Island mansion and out-houses.

In his ignorance of the usual landing-place, Julius Luxmore could not decide toward which point of the Island beach to direct his course. At length, however, he determined to come to anchor, and go out in his little skiff to reconnoitre the coast, and perhaps to make his first visit to the mansion-house. He accordingly gave orders to drop the anchor, and to let down the skiff. And when these commands were fulfilled, having made a careful toilet, he entered the little boat, and alone, with his single oar, struck out toward the Isle.

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On a nearer approach this gem of the sea grew, if possible, still brighter and more beautiful. The calm repose and crystal clearness of the water that kissed its shores, reflected as in a mirror the rich refulgent foliage that girdled them. Julius Luxmore pushed his boat up close under the overhanging branches, and so in the deep refreshing shadows, proceeded to row around the Isle in search of some convenient landing-place.

Presently he came to a tiny rock-bound islet of pellucid depth, that might have been the grotto of the Naiad Queen, or the bath of beauty for all the sea-nymphs.

And, oh, Orpheus! what sounds are these that break the silence like the shiver of a thousand silver bells?

It is a voice of entrancing melody—a sweet, rich, elastic, bird-like voice, caroling a jubilant, exultant air, the words of which are lost in the rapture of the notes.

To enjoy this delightful song without disturbing the singer, Julius Luxmore pushed his boat up under the shelter of an overhanging alder tree, where he remained concealed in the deep obscurity.

Presently the song ceased, and the cessation was accompanied by the sound of a plunge into the still water of the inlet.

He peered out from his hiding-place, but for a few moments saw nothing except the widening circle of ripples where the water had been disturbed—and then—oh, Amphitrite, and all the Naiads! What was it? Was it a mermaid or was it a mortal?

The face and head of a beautiful girl of that sweet age between childhood and womanhood, yet nearer childhood, appeared above the surface. This fair creature was clad in a long flowing white garment that completely vailed her perfect form as she floated gracefully about, disporting herself in the bright pellucid water. Julius Luxmore dared scarcely breathe, lest he should dissolve the lovely vision

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from which he could not withdraw his fascinated gaze. As she swam or dived, or reared her radiant head with its golden hair all spangled with the diamond dew that sparkled in the slanting sun rays, she still sang snatches of a wild, gay air, though in a somewhat lower key, as though her sportive evolutions in the water, carried off some portion of the overflowing life that had at first inspired her song. So she continued to sport and sing—sometimes diving to the bottom and bringing up handsfull of the pearl-like pebbles that she threw high into the sky to see them fall a mimic hailstorm into the calm water that then leaped up in a thousand rainbow sparkles!—sometimes swimming joyously on to the mouth of the fairy inlet, and whirling around and hurrying back, lashing the water with her white arms in a whimsical affectation of terror; and sometimes with bosom level and head only slightly raised, floating upon the surface as idly and lightly as a lotus leaf, until the sun went down.

"That is my Princess of the Isle!—that is my Star of the Sea!—as poor Victoire called her! It can be no other!" said Julius Luxmore, gazing in a sort of ecstacy of anticipated possession on the bewitching creature.

"Ah, Barbara, Barbara! even you would scarcely blame me for being dazzled by such a prize!" he continued, devouring this beauteous vision with his eyes.

"At this moment a voice was heard from the Island——

"Etoile! Etoile! my Pearl!"

"Here, Maman, here!" responded the clear, silvery tones of the swimmer.

And at her voice, a handsome quadroon woman, middle-aged, and neatly dressed, emerged from the bushes overhanging the spot, and came cautiously down to the brink of the inlet.

As she appeared, the little maiden came out of the water, laughing, and wringing her dripping hair.

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"Little Nereid!" said the nurse, fondly holding out her hand to assist her in the assent of the bank.

"No! unless you mean the Queen of the Nereids!—Amphitrite, if you will, nothing less!" laughed the maiden, as she joined her nurse, and both disappeared among the trees.

"Was ever any thing out of Heaven so wondrous beautiful! And is that exquisite creature, at some day or other, to be mine, my own? Upon my life and conscience it may be so, for I see nothing to prevent it! Come! even if to wait five years for her, were not the quickest, easiest, and surest way of securing an immense fortune, it would still be well worth while to wait to secure such a pearl as herself alone!" mused Julius Luxmore, as he came out of his retreat, and pushed his boat onward on his exploration of the Island shores.

After making about three-quarters of the whole circuit, he came to the regular landing place with its neat little pier, the protective railings and the steps of which were painted green and white.

Here he moored his boat and paused to consider the propriety of, at that late hour, presenting himself at the Island mansion.

The sun had set; but the reflection of his last rays still flushed with crimson all the western horizon, while the orient was bathed in golden glory with the beams of the risen full moon. Under the two lights the lovely Island lay like a scene of enchantment. Lamps gleamed from the lower windows of the white fronted mansion.

Upon the whole, Julius Luxmore could not resist the temptation to go forward. He looked critically at his own dress. In view of this possible visit he had, before leaving the vessel, carefully arranged his toilet; and now upon examination, he found that it had contracted no soil, nor in any other way had it become disarranged.

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He stepped out of his boat, went up the steps to the pier and walked onward under the tall branches of the trees, that met over his head, up the long avenue leading to the house, until at last he reached a terrace crowned with a trellis, thickly over-grown with climbing roses, still in full bloom. He had but just reached this spot and noted a graceful, golden-haired, white-robed female form leaning over the trellis of roses, when he was suddenly struck and thrown down beneath an overwhelming weight, to find himself in the powerful grasp of a huge bull-dog, who had fastened his jaws firmly on his shoulder. Tightly as the beast held him, it was with a certain wise and merciful reserve of his fangs, for though his strong teeth clenched, they did not penetrate the broadcloth of the coat, far less the skin of the man. Yet Julius Luxmore felt certain that at the first struggle to escape, those fearful fangs would be buried deeply in his flesh and crimsoned with his blood.

All this passed in a single instant of time, for, "in the twinkling of an eye," the white-robed female figure, whom Luxmore had recognized as Etoile, darted down the terrace, and threw herself upon the great brute, half-caressingly and half-rebukingly, and said—

"Why, Dragon! how dare you, sir? What ails you? Let go, this moment!"

But the huge beast, without relaxing his hold, rolled his blood-shot eyes up toward his little mistress, and growled a remonstrance.

"What, sir! you will not obey?" exclaimed the little girl, taking hold of his ears, and shaking his head. The dog released the prisoner, but growled a very decided difference of opinion with his mistress upon this subject of setting the stranger at liberty. Julius Luxmore, who had at all hazards struggled to rise, now sprang to his feet, bowed, and was about to deliver the neat salutation he had im-

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provised for the occasion, when Etoile interrupted him by saying, with inimitable grace and simplicity—

"Stranger, I am very sorry that Dragon should have behaved so rudely; I pray you to forgive him; he is not naturally wicked, and must have been very unwell to have acted in such a surly manner to a visitor. I hope you will think no more of it, sir, but do us the pleasure to walk into the house."

"I thank you, young lady," said Julius Luxmore, with a bow, "I am here to see Mr. De L'Ile, if he can be spoken with."

"Yes, sir! and your name is——?"

"Julius Luxmore."

The little girl raised a small silver whistle that hung at her side, and blew a clear, sweet blast, that presently brought a mulatto page to her presence.

"Go to your master, Frivola, and say that a gentleman of the name of Luxmore has arrived, and desires an interview with him," she said.

The boy bowed low, and went to obey.

"Excuse me, young lady," said Mr. Luxmore, with a waive of his hand, as he left the side of Etoile, and stepped after the page to say, "Tell your master that Mr. Luxmore brings him news of his niece and nephew, Madame L'Orient and Monsieur Victoire."

Again the boy bowed, and then hurried onward toward the house to do his errand.

Mr. Luxmore returned to the side of the little maiden.

"What a paradise is this home of yours, young lady," he said, in a tone of sincere admiration.

"Oh! do you find it so? I am very glad you like it; but it is very strange you should!"

"You think it strange that I should like this charming spot!" exclaimed Luxmore, in genuine surprise.

"Do you find it charming also? How curious!"

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"Why, yes! Do not *you* think it charming?"

"Oh, certainly, *I* do! but you perceive I know nothing better than this! But it is very strange that *you* should find the Isle so charming?"

"But why?"

"Oh! because *you* came from the beautiful world beyond!" said Etoile, with a sigh of aspiration.

"Ah! and you think the world beyond so beautiful?"

"Oh, yes, sir! I think it is!"

"Again—why?"

"Oh, because I know it!—it is a beautiful! a glorious! an enchanting world, beyond these seas!"

"But how do you know it, my little angel?"

"Oh, sir! I can see from here its lovely shores! vaguely, indeed; but still, I *can* see them, and can judge what their celestial beauty on a nearer view must be!"

"Whe-ew! 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,' and 'hills are green far away,' say the poets and the sages; and here is a little fairy living in a fairy land, who thinks all beauty, poetry, and delight resides in the work-a-day world 'beyond these seas,' as she calls it!" thought Mr. Luxmore, as he stood contemplating the fervent, enthusiastic little creature before him.

"And you have never been to the world beyond?"

"Never, sir! They say I came from that lovely world, but it is so long ago I do not remember it."

"I suspect you came not from the world *beyond*, but from the world *above*, fair seraph!" said Mr. Luxmore, with an attempt at flattery.

But his little companion was far too unschooled in worldliness to understand or appreciate the compliment, and she answered, simply—

"I do not recollect, sir! I wish, indeed, that I did remember the lovely world whence I came."

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"And you have never had an opportunity of reviving your recollections, even by a visit to the mainland?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Do you ever see persons from those shores?"

"Ah, sir! I have never in my life seen but *two* persons from the world beyond—and they were both so beautiful! just like the shores whence they came; but like nobody at all on this Island!"

"And who were those angels, or demigods, in human form, young lady?" inquired Julius Luxmore, as a pang of jealousy shot through his heart.

"Oh, sir! *one* was Barbara Brande. She came to see me once after my grandmere, Madame L'Orient, went away. Oh! Barbara was something better than any thing I had ever seen before! She reminded me of a chieftainess such as I have read of in history—I do not mean of a common-place queen, but of a warrior queen—a leader of armies, a Boadicea, a Zenobia, a Semiramis! Her eyes were the eyes of a goddess—so full, and clear, and commanding! Are all women in your world beyond like Barbara Brande, do you know?"

Julius was thinking of that Barbara, that grand girl, whom the graphic description of Etoile had conjured in all her noble beauty before him, and he did not reply until the little maiden had repeated her question, then he answered:

"Probably not. There are very few anywhere who would answer to your description of Miss Brande."

"Oh! but I would like to see her again!"

"Has Miss Brande been to see you often? Is she in the habit of coming?" inquired Julius, very uneasily; for there could scarcely be conceived an event more threatening to his projects than a visit from Barbara Brande to the Island.

"Oh, no! oh, no! She was never here but once—that was two years ago, directly after my grandmere departed!'

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"Do you know why she never came again?"

"I think so! My uncle discourages visitors from the world beyond!"

"And he is quite right," thought Julius Luxmore, to himself.

But Etoile looked pensive.

"Well, fair one! you spoke of *two* very handsome visitors—the only persons from the main you had ever seen!—*one* was Miss Brande! Now I have a curiosity to know who was the *other*?"

"Why, do you not know?"

"No, indeed!"

"And can you not guess?"

"Not I."

"Well, then, of course it was *yourself*, stranger! Who else, indeed, could it possibly have been?"

"Well, if that is not a sincere piece of flattery, I do not know what else it should be called!" said Julius Luxmore, to himself.

"Ah! I do wish to go on the beautiful main!" sighed Etoile.

"But you have not yet told me, fair child, how—since you have never been near the main—you know it to be so beautiful?"

"Oh, sir, you forget! I did! I told you that I saw both shores—dimly, it is true, but I saw them! There is the coast that I call the sunrise shore!—its beach looks like glistening silver! the verdure on its higher swells of land like shining emeralds! and over all the morning sun diffuses a rich, roseate glow! Oh, it is so beautiful even from this distance! and how much more so it must be from a nearer view."

"Whe—ew! the coast of Accommac! a flat reach of sand varied only by starved grass and stunted evergreens. But I suppose the atmospheric magic throws a charm over even

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that desolate shore," thought Julius Luxmore, watching with interest the young enthusiast, who ignorant of his secret comments—continued in her strain of sincere, though erring admiration.

"And then there is the opposite coast that I call the sunset shore, and that is a thousand times richer, more varied and more beautiful than the other. At different seasons, on different days, and even at different hours, its aspect changes, and each change is lovely or magnificent. Sometimes it looks like a shore of gold, when the refulgent light of sunset glances athwart its sands—sometimes the hues are of amethyst, sometimes of emerald, then of ruby, but always is the color of the coast varied with the ever-changing, ever glorious sunset sky above it."

Even in that pale moonlight, he could see her eyes kindle and glow, as she spoke. And while he listened and gazed in growing admiration of this fair creature, so beautiful, so refined, so cultivated, yet so entirely inexperienced and simple, the boy Frivole reappeared upon the terrace and announced that his master was now ready to give audience to Mr. Luxmore.

"That is well," said Etoile, who had had some doubts upon the subject of the stranger's reception by the reserved old man. "That is well, and I am glad."

"This way, please sir," said Frivole, as he bowed and led the way across the rose terrace, and up the granite steps, through the front portico of the mansion.

"My master is in his library," he continued, as he preceded the visitor down the central hall, until he arrived at the second door on the right hand.

"Mr. Luxmore," he then announced, ushering in the visitor.

Julius found himself in a plain, medium-sized apartment, having two back windows. The simple furniture consisted of a straw-matting on the floor, straw-bottomed chairs

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ranged along the walls, window-blinds, and fire-screen of painted canvas, a single mahogany centre-table, and one arm-chair beside it in which sat Monsieur Henri De L'Ile, otherwise, his Majesty the King of the Island, who now arose and stood in an attitude of gracious dignity to receive the "Embassador."

Mr. Julius Luxmore gave one quick, comprehensive glance at this potentate.

The Island King had aged much since we last heard of him. His venerable face, surrounded by its circle of snow-white hair and beard, was bleached and sunken, his imposing form was feeble and bowed; his dress was still studiously neat, and even elegant, though in the style of the last century—consisting of a somewhat faded mazarine blue velvet coat, white satin vest, white doe-skin small-clothes, white silk hose, black pumps, and diamond shoe-buckles. He stood with his right hand resting upon the table, and his left hand opened and waved—in an attitude and with an expression that in a real king might have been called royal courtesy, but that in Monsieur Henri De L'Ile, was something indescribable.

Mr. Julius Luxmore found himself in a dilemma, as to the manner in which he should address this anomalous personage. Firstly, it was vitally important that this potentate should not be offended—secondly, that he should be conciliated. How should Mr. Julius Luxmore avoid the first, and effect the last? In truth, this was a serious difficulty—for should the lunatic happen to be enjoying a lucid interval, it would be insulting to address him as "Sire," or "Your Majesty," whereas, should he, on the other hand, chance to be still under the influence of his monomania, it would be treason and destruction to address him as Monsieur De L'Ile. Meanwhile he filled up the swiftly passing moments by slowly advancing and lowly bowing. And when he could draw no nearer he came to a stand and

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bowed in silence, hoping that some word or gesture on the part of his host would furnish him with the cue.

Not so—for the manner of Monsieur De L'Ile, or his Majesty, might equally have been the patient politeness of a prince or of a private gentleman.

Julius was almost in despair, while the necessity of speaking was imminent—he bowed for the last time and commenced:

"I have the honor of addressing——" Here he paused not daring to add either—"Mr. De L'Ile," or "His Majesty, the King of the Isles," but waited, hat in hand, for the other party to come to his aid.

The other party did nothing of the sort, but merely nodded courteously, and waited his further words.

Upon the whole, Julius decided not to take up and complete his unfinished sentence, and "shirked" the difficulty by saying:

"I have the honor, sir, of being the custodian of certain documents entrusted to my care by Monsieur, the late Victoire L'Orient."

"The 'late!' Mon Dieu! the 'late!' And is the prince, my nephew, dead then?" exclaimed the old man, in consternation, controled even at that trying moment by his sense of kingly dignity.

But Mr. Julius Luxmore now had his cue! he bowed with the greatest deference, and lowering his tone to a key of the deepest solemnity, said:

"Sire—it is with the profoundest grief that I announce to your Majesty the death of his Highness, the Prince, your nephew, Monseigneur Victoire L'Orient."

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Oh, hapless house! Oh miserable princes!" ejaculated the old man, sinking into his chair and covering his face with his hands.

For a little while both were silent—Monsieur De L'Ile,

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from real sorrow—Mr. Julius Luxmore, from affected respect and sympathy.

At length the former raised his head, saying:

"How and when did this occur? Give me all the details, sir."

Julius bowed, and standing, cap in hand, before his Majesty, gave an account of the voyage and wreck of the Mercury.

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!" was still the interjection of the bereaved old man.

"But, pardon, sire—Monseigneur Victoire, the prince, your nephew, left a daughter."

"Go on, Monsieur; go on. You would speak of the Princess Etoile."

Julius bowed profoundly.

"Say on, sir."

Julius then explained that he had enjoyed the friendship and confidence of "Monseigneur" Victoire L'Orient, who had entrusted him with the guardianship of his young daughter; that he was prepared to exhibit the will of the "Prince" at any moment most convenient to "His Majesty."

"I will, then, overlook the documents to-morrow, Monsieur. Bring them to me, in this room, at ten o'clock in the morning. For the present, I feel overcome and must retire. Meanwhile, let me hope that you will avail yourself of what poor hospitality a reduced king can offer. Be good enough to ring, sir," said the old man, in a weary but still dignified manner.

Julius took the bell-rope, and rang a peal that presently brought the little page, Frivole, to the presence.

"Boy, show this gentleman into the back drawing-room, and set refreshments before him. Afterward, when he shall wish to retire for the night, attend him to the bedchamber formerly occupied by Madame," said "His Majesty."

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Then turning toward the visitor, he added :

"I hope you will palliate to yourself any lack of attendance that you may perceive, sir. I have lately suffered a great loss in the death of my chamberlain, Monsieur Louis, whose place I have not been able to supply. Good rest be yours, sir," and with a courteous nod and wave of the hand, the King of the Isle dismissed the 'Embassador.'

Julius bowed nearly to the ground, and walking backward, as from royal presence, withdrew from the room.

"A courteous gentleman—a truly courteous gentleman. I like him well," ruminated his Majesty, who had never before been so adroitly flattered.

Meanwhile, Julius Luxmore followed the little page across the hall to the opposite room, where the boy left him to go and bring refreshments.

"So—so," mused Julius when thus left alone—"that clever quadroon man-of-business, Louis, who gave the late lamented Madame L'Orient so much trouble, and who might have given me a deal more, is now out of everybody's way—good. And his place as premier is not supplied—better. I will endeavor to supply it—best. Come, Julius Luxmore, your star is in the ascendant."

While thus he soliloquized, Frivole reappeared, bringing a waiter with lights and refreshments, that he arranged upon the table.

"Where is your young mistress?" inquired Mr. Luxmore of the boy, hesitating to designate her as Miss L'Orient or as the princess, for the simple reason, that he was ignorant of how much this boy might be imbued with the illusions of his master.

"The princess has gone to bed," replied Frivole.

Mr. Luxmore understood,—whether from credulity or policy, the negroes of the place entered into the humor of their master's monomania. The only doubt left to be cleared upon this subject was, whether they believed in or flattered

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the royal assumptions of the old man. And this problem Julius determined to solve—if he could. But Julius Luxmore, with all his cunning, was no match for the secretiveness of the youngest negro on the Isle. He dared not, in many words, ask his young attendant if he considered his master a madman. And to all his astute observations and indirect questions, intended to draw out the boy's thoughts upon the subject, Frivole replied with a tact of evasion quite equal to the questioner's art of investigation. The boy's manner was graceful, smooth, and subtle. Mr. Luxmore felt himself playing with some beautiful, slippery serpent, whose evolutions were all charming, but who might possibly turn and sting him. He let Frivole alone.

When his meal was finished, the boy offered to show him up to his sleeping apartment.

And Mr. Luxmore arose and accepted his services. He was conducted up stairs and introduced into the second floor, front, right-hand chamber, the best in the house.

From the front windows of this room, Mr. Luxmore looked out to sea, and saw his schooner riding at anchor a short distance from the coast. Some little anxiety he felt upon the subject of this vessel, left all night in the hands of the negro crew; but, after mature deliberation, he decided that it was best that he should remain for the night the guest of Monsieur De L'Ile. So he left the vessel to its fate, and went to bed.

It was a long hour before mental exhilaration yielded to bodily fatigue and permitted him to sink to sleep, and then his slumber was disturbed by exciting dreams of wealth and grandeur; and, after a restless and perturbed night, he was early awakened by the carolling of a sweet, joyous voice under his window. He knew that voice, and he slipped out of bed, went to the window, and, concealing himself in the curtains, peeped out.

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First of all, out at sea, he saw his ship, still riding safely at anchor.

Then, on the rose-terrace below, stood Etoile, her graceful little shoulders wrapped in a blue silk mantle to protect them from the early morning dampness.

Julius hastened to make his toilet and descend to the portico.

As soon as she heard the door open, and saw the visitor come out, she turned and came dancing up the steps to greet him.

Mr. Luxmore saw by her manner that she knew nothing of the calamitous intelligence he had the night before revealed to Monsieur De L'Ile.

He thought as she came toward him that she looked far more beautiful in the morning light than she had seemed the evening previous. She was but eleven years old, yet well grown and well developed for that age. There was in her fair young beauty a look of unsunned newness and freshness delightful to contemplate.

She came up carolling, but ceased her song to say:

"I am so glad you came down so early, Mr. Luxmore. The sun is rising. Oh, come see it over my sunrise shore!"

"With pleasure," said Julius. "From what point shall we view it?"

"Oh, from the eastern extremity of the rose-terrace, here —where there is nothing to intercept the view," she said, dancing down the steps, and leading the way.

Julius followed, whither she led, to the eastern end of the terrace, where they stood under an arch of multifloras.

"There; look out over the water. Look at the glorious world beyond!" she said exultingly.

From the height on which they stood the ground descended in a succession of gentle undulating green hills, down to the pearly beach, whence the broad blue waters rolled sparkling away toward the far distant "sunrise shore,"

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which looked, under the glorious morning light, like the very foundations of the celestial city.

"See, oh see!—if all the precious stones that ever were created were fused and streamed along the orient, they could not burn and glow and radiate and flash like that!—could they? Look, oh look! first along the blue water, a long line of silvery light; then golden, then ruby, then topaz, then sapphire, then all the colors of the rainbow flushing the clouds. Ah! that shore! shall I ever set my foot upon that shore," she breathed with intense aspiration.

"Ay, that you shall, my pretty one! I promise you."

"Oh! have you that power, sir?" she exclaimed, turning quickly and flashing upon him a sudden, penetrating gaze.

"Aye, I have that power, fair one, else I should not now be here."

"But tell me how is that?"

"You shall learn in the course of the day, little lady."

"Shall I tread that glorious shore very soon?"

"As soon as it may be proper and expedient that you should," replied Julius Luxmore, feeling a curious interest in the visual illusion that presented a wild, rugged and desolate coast, under such a celestial aspect to the insulated Island maiden; but wondering no longer that her whole imagination invested the whole world beyond with such heavenly beauty—for after all, the cause lay in the atmospheric effect of distance, and she conceived the glorious shores only as she saw them.

The ringing of the breakfast bell summoned them to the house.

The breakfast table was neatly arranged in the back parlor on the left side of the hall.

Madeleine the quadroon and her son Frivole were in attendance. But two covers were laid.

Madeleine courtesied and announced that her master would not appear at the table, but would breakfast in his

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room, and begged that his guest would excuse him and command his house and servants.

Julius Luxmore would do that thing with great pleasure at some future time, he thought.

He handed the little girl to her seat at the table, and took his place at the opposite side of the board.

Madeleine was a good housekeeper, and the breakfast was excellent.

When the morning meal was over, Mr. Luxmore assorted his papers that he always now carefully carried about his person, and prepared for his visit to Monsieur De L'Ile.

At the appointed hour he presented himself.

He found "His Majesty" in the same room, seated at the same table, where he had been first introduced to him. In truth, the Island King looked not much the worse for the sad news that had been told him. He was clothed in a somewhat faded purple cashmere dressing gown, and now seemed fuller of business than of sorrow.

"I am glad of this. It is the way of madness, however," said Julius Luxmore to himself, on seeing the state of the case.

As the "Embassador" advanced to the table, "His Majesty" looked up and nodded graciously and desired that Monsieur would waive ceremony, draw up a chair and seat himself, that they might proceed to business.

Mr. Luxmore complied.

But it is not necessary that I should trouble the reader with the details of "business" transacted between a madman on the one part and a villain on the other. It is sufficient to say that Mr. Luxmore presented his credentials—consisting of the last will and testament of Victoire L'Orient together with various documents, all valuable as corroborative testimony to the authenticity of the will.

The credentials were so well received, and the bearer of the credentials so well approved, that after some excellent

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diplomacy, Julius Luxmore found himself so high in royal favor as to receive the appointment to the post of premier, *vice* Monsieur Louis, deceased.

His Majesty then occupied himself with details of the solemnities of the royal mourning, which he decided should be purple; and then he commissioned Monsieur the Minister—*videlicit*—Mr. Julius Luxmore, to go upon the main, and make the needful purchases.

Finally, dismissing Mr. Luxmore to do his errand, he sent for the "Princess," and in a private interview communicated to her the facts of the decease of her relatives This intelligence threw over the youthful maiden an air of seriousness that was, however, as far removed from sorrow, as was she golden haze of these autumnal mornings from thunder clouds. It was not natural that the young Etoile should grieve over the loss of relatives, one of whom she had never seen, from the other of whom she had been so long separated. In truth no one sorrowed. The young maiden was too happy, the old man too crazy, and the servants all too indifferent to do so. The "bereavement" spread no gloom over the bright Island, where it was not fully realized. Only sometimes the mad old man would suddenly recollect that he ought to be overwhelmed with affliction, and then he would fall to tearing his white hair and exclaiming:

"Oh, miserable princess! Oh, hapless house!" And having paid this tribute of lamentation to the departed would resume his habitual cheerfulness.

The truth is, that the old man was sinking deeper into the infirmities of body and imbecilities of mind attendant upon extreme old age.

And Julius Luxmore soon found himself invested not only with the government of the farm, fisheries, and financial affairs of the Island, but also with the care of the old man's person, and with that of the young girl's education.

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It really seemed as if the place had needed and waited for his coming. Had he been a conscientious and disinterested man, his arrival would have been a most opportune blessing. But he was selfish, and unprincipled, and he turned, you may readily believe, every circumstance of his position to his own advantage.

He adroitly and successfully flattered the old man, and thus attained the first place in the dotard's esteem and confidence.

By delicate attentions and interesting instructions, he so well recommended himself to the favor of the fair Etoile, as to become in some degree essential to the little maiden's happiness.

He also, in conducting the sales of produce from the farm and fisheries of the Island, changed the place of trade from the hamlet of Eastville on the eastern shore of the village of Heathville, about sixty miles further up the Bay on the west coast. His motive for this change, it will be easily seen, was to avoid a neighborhood where he was sure to be recognized, in favor of one where he was a total stranger.

In short, Mr. Julius Luxmore did as he pleased. His rule "there was none to dispute." The old man was duped; the young maiden fascinated; and the quadroon, even if she escaped the spell of his deceit, was, since deprived of her coadjutor, Louis, notwithstanding her intellectual brightness, but a meek creature, to be cunningly managed rather than feared.

His schooner had for some weeks remained at anchor near the Isle; but the negro crew were forbidden to leave her deck, and so had never approached the beach. Every day Mr. Luxmore had visited the vessel to look after the safety of the craft, and the necessities of the men. And when at last it was convenient to do so, he had taken two of the Island sailors, embarked with them on the schooner,

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and set sail for Norfolk, where he paid off and discharged his hired men.

Then, having thus got rid of the "aliens," he purchased some books and pictures for Etoile, and a gorgeous purple dressing-gown for "His Majesty," and with the two home negroes, set sail for the Isle. After a short and pleasant voyage, he arrived there to rejoice all hearts. And it is difficult to decide whether was Etoile the more delighted with her books and pictures, or "His Majesty" with his royal robe.

It is not to be supposed, however, that a man of Julius Luxmore's age, habits, and temperament, could be content to confine himself within the contracted limits of a sea-girt Island, with no other society than an old lunatic, a young maiden, and a troop of negro slaves, and with no change of scene than an occasional voyage to Heathville, to sell a cargo of corn or fish. With all Etoile's delightful beauty, she was but a child; with all his golden prospects, the time passed heavily; he was wearied, bored; he no longer wondered that Etoile pined for "the glorious world beyond." He himself, who knew it well to be any thing but "glorious," also pined for it.

In a word, he felt the necessity of devising some plan of safe and frequent intercourse with "the rest of mankind."

But this communication with his fellow-creatures, to be secure, must be, like the "reciprocity" of some people, all on one side. He must change the scene; must often go somewhere; but no one else should ever come to the Island. No one should know of the precious treasure hidden there.

But we will, for the present, leave this delectable young gentleman to make the best of his good fortune, while we go back after his forsaken love, Captain Barbara Brande, and her noble passenger.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

BARBARA'S VOYAGE.

"Merrily, merrily goes the barque,
On a breeze from the northward free;
So shoots through the morning sky the lark
Or the swan through the summer sea!
Upon the gale she stoops her side,
And bounds before the swelling tide,
As she were dancing home:
The merry seamen laugh to see
Their gallant ship so lustily
Furrow the green sea foam."—*Scott.*

THE Petrel was favored with fine weather until the seventh day out, when near 30° north latitude she entered the Gulf-stream, and faced the trade winds then blowing from an east and north-easterly direction. The violence and persistence of this gale kept her back for several days, so that it was the first of November before she dropped anchor in the harbor of Havana.

Here Lord Montressor took leave of Miss Brande, cordially shaking hands with her at parting, and asking and receiving permission to visit the vessel during her stay in port.

And while Barbara occupied herself with discharging her cargo, Lord Montressor established himself at the Hotel Macon, and from this quarter pursued his inquiries for Estelle. He found that the Sea Mew had reached port about fifteen days previous to the arrival of the Petrel; that she had discharged her cargo, taken in fresh freight, and about a week since had sailed for Rio Janeiro. But he could hear of no passengers that she had brought to Havana; on the contrary, he was assured by several persons of whom he made the inquiry that she had certainly brought none.

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But opposed to this testimony were the facts that he had learned at Baltimore. Thus with a perplexed, discouraged, but persevering heart he still pursued the almost hopeless search.

In the progress of his investigations, particularly near the harbor, he often met with Barbara Brande. No word had ever passed between them upon the object of his voyage, yet that object was well known to Miss Brande. She longed for the sister's privilege of counseling him. Knowing the utter futility of his search, she felt it to be, in herself, a sort of treachery to permit him to pursue it. Often when they chanced to meet, her sympathizing eyes were fixed with a sorrowful, prayful expression upon his troubled countenance.

Once when he visited her, in the cabin of her own vessel, while both sat at the little centre table, she fixed her honest eyes full upon his care-worn face and said—

"Lord Montressor, give me your confidence."

He looked up in surprise.

Her open countenance did not blench, nor was her straightforward look for a moment withdrawn. Indeed there was in her resonant tones, unflinching regard, and confident manner something of the authority of the sybil. Lord Montressor really admired the honest, brave, upright and downright nature of Barbara Brande. And now it was something more than admiration, it was a sort of deference that he felt for her. But she was looking straight at him, and was waiting for an answer.

"But why, Miss Brande, should I burden you with my confidences?" he asked mildly.

"Because I can aid you."

"You can aid me!"

"Ay, sir; for I know your history. Do not ask me *how* I know it; for I cannot tell you without a breach of confidence. But, sir, I know the object of your pursuit, and

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know it to be, for the present at least, utterly futile—as it indeed should be!"

"Miss Brande!"

"Lord Montressor, I have no puerile fear of misconstruction at your hands—you are not the slave of a conventionalism that may be 'a good servant, but a bad master.' You will not, I am sure, accuse me of obtrusiveness—and even if you did——"

"And if I did——?"

"I should survive it!" smiled Barbara.

But then growing suddenly serious, she said—

"I told you that I could aid you, sir; but for that power of helping you I had not spoken!"

"I thank you from the depths of my heart, Miss Brande! And I am sure that your words will be justified. But—you know my story! You know the object of my voyage! *do* you know where Lady Montressor is?"

"Sir, I cannot answer that question without a breach of confidence. What I can tell you without blame, I will tell you without question. In the first place, your search here is utterly hopeless! Lady Montressor is not in Havana. In the second place, where she tarries, she is well, only wishing for the present to sequester herself from you."

"For the *present*."

"*I* said for the present. Your lordship will please to put yourself for a moment in this lady's place, and you will see that as a Christian woman, she can do no otherwise than she does, Consider, sir, that the validity of your marriage is *questioned* and rests for final decision with the Spiritual Court of Arches."

"Miss Brande! a higher tribunal than any earthly court has already adjudged this cause. The claimant of Lady Montressor's hand is numbered with the dead."

"I know it. Yet how forgetful men are! You should remember, sir, that this claimant was also once, whether

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rightfully or wrongfully—the *possessor* of this lady's hand. Therefore, my lord, the lady is right, right, right, and forever right, in having considered that circumstance—while that claimant lived, a barrier to her second marriage. And now, Lord Montressor, let me say to you, that all your hopes for a future union with the Lady Estelle rest upon the decision of the Court of Arches."

"In the name of Heaven, *how*—what do you mean?"

"This—should the Court of Arches decide the marriage of Monsieur L'Orient and Miss Morelle to have been illegal——"

"Well! then?"

"She will never emerge from her obscurity; as a delicate and high-minded woman she never can. But on the other hand, should the Court of Arches decide that her childish marriage was legal——"

"Well! then?"

"Then, my lord, you are free to woo the widow, and I —Barbara Brande will give you the aid I promised!"

"Miss Brande! Is this your ethics? How is it possible that a decision of the Court of Arches can affect the righteousness of an action already past, as its record now stands before the higher tribunal of Heaven?"

"It cannot do so, of course. Whatever be the decision of the Court, the case remains in the sight of God the same. And this, lady Estelle, whose womanly instincts have never been confused by the sinuosities of law, or the subtleties of theology, feels that her childish marriage, however wrong in itself, was binding in its obligations. Those who assail the legality of that unhappy union, wound her in the tenderest point. And should the Court of Arches decide against it, they will cast upon her a reproach that she will never consent, by marrying, to reflect upon any one she loves!" said Barbara, as a sudden and burning blush, for the freedom of her speech, swept over her cheek and

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vindicated the woman's under the hero's nature. For Barbara was as modest and sensitive as she was frank and brave. She could deeply feel, as well as disregard the pain of speaking upon this delicate subject.

Lord Montressor admired the rare honesty, courage, and disinterestedness of her really great nature. He paused a few moments before replying, and then said—

"You have given me some food for reflection, Miss Brande. I do not know but that you have been the best exponent of my lady's motives and conduct, with whom I have yet met; although I have talked upon this subject with the Bishop of Exeter, and with the Baron Dazzleright, who both regarded the affair in an opposite light to that in which you view it."

"The reason was, that one was a clergyman, and thought only of the theological aspect; the other a lawyer, and considered wholly the legal appearance; while I, a woman, with only the grace of God to throw light upon my natural instincts, enter heart and soul into all my sister woman's feelings"

"I believe you are right, and, by your showing, Estelle was also very right in reserving herself from my knowledge and pursuit from the moment that our marriage festivities were interrupted."

"Undoubtedly, my lord! Oh, sir! I feel sure that you will yet have cause to bless Heaven that she *did* so—that she was *known* beyond doubt to have done so."

"You may be proved to be right—in case that the Bishops' Bench establish the legality of the first union. But, Miss Brande, since, as it appears, you know Estelle, since you have conversed with her, and received her confidence, you must also be aware that the doubt which rests upon the legality of her first marriage, is not her only reason for sequestering herself."

"I know it; but it is the most important one; let it be

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removed, and it rests with your lordship to make her forget or forsake the other. *And you will do so.*"

Lord Montressor smiled. There was something so confident, so animating, so inspiring in the cheerful faith of this good and brave girl. He greatly needed more satisfaction in regard to Estelle, but he felt that he could not in justice or generosity seek intelligence of Barbara, who had said that to give him more information on the subject would involve a breach of confidence.

He cordially expressed his gratitude for the friendly interest she had taken in his cause, and with a promise to repeat his visit, bade her adieu. He returned to his hotel to reflect upon his future course.

The next day he called up his valet, and said: "Go and search for a vessel about to sail for England."

"My lord, the vessel in which we came, the Petrel, is bound for Liverpool in a few days," replied the man.

"Ah, is that so? Miss Brande told me nothing of the sort yesterday. However," added his lordship mentally, "we were too closely engaged in talking of another matter."

"It is true, however, my lord; the Petrel is advertised for Liverpool."

"Oh, yes! probably Miss Brande took it for granted that I had seen the notice, and knew all about it. Go down to the docks, then, and secure berths in the Petrel. Or, stay, remain here, and pack up; I will go down to the vessel to engage a passage," said Lord Montressor, who was not only well-pleased to have this excuse for visiting Barbara, but also delighted with the prospect of returning to England in her vessel in her company.

A rapid walk brought him to the docks. A little skiff took him alongside the Petrel, upon the deck of which stood the handsome Amazon, busily engaged in giving her orders.

The sun on this November day shone down brightly and

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hotly on the harbor and the shipping, and fell directly upon the stately form of Barbara, as she stood bareheaded upon the deck. No sea breeze now lifted her tresses, but her raven black hair lay rippling and glistening in purplish lustre under the beams of that tropical sun, that seemed not to burn, but only to ripen her luscious southern beauty. The rich bloom of her complexion rivaled that of the ruddiest tropical fruit. And in hue like the purple glow of grape tendrils, were the tresses of her hair against those pomegranate cheeks. The broad and massive forehead, the well-defined black brows, the strong flashing eyes, the straight high nose, firm though rounded lips, and above all, the erect, elastic carriage; the fearless, resolute look; and the clear, resonant voice, gave a character of strength and energy to a style of beauty otherwise too voluptuous. Her costume evinced her usual disregard to every quality in dress, except its fitness, and consisted of the customary gray serge gown and sacque.

She was engaged in giving directions in regard to the stowing of some freight. On seeing Lord Montressor coming up the starboard gangway, she advanced with a smile and an extended hand to meet him.

"Good-morning, Lord Montressor. I am *very* glad to see you."

"Not so glad as I am to stand before you, I dare be sworn, Miss Brande."

"Ah! but to have returned so soon you must have had a motive. Now, how can we serve you, Lord Montressor?"

"You are going to England?"

"Yes, sir; it is the best thing that I can do! I am going to Liverpool to take a cargo of sugar and molasses and probably to bring back one of Manchester dry goods Can I do any thing for you in England?"

"You can take me thither."

'Ah! you have decided on going home?"

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"I have, after mature deliberation, determined to return to England and await the action of the Spiritual Court, if, indeed, the action has not been arrested by the intelligence of the death of Monsieur L'Orient."

"And if it has, you will cause the proper parties to set it going again?"

"Perhaps," replied Lord Montressor.

"At all events, I am glad that you have decided on going to watch the progress of the affair, my lord, and *very* glad to have the pleasure of your company on the voyage," said Barbara, with such cordial sincerity, that her whole warm countenance glowed with the light of the happiness she expressed.

"I thank you very earnestly; and, believe me, the satisfaction you express is much more than reciprocated by myself. I would have waited some time and foregone many other good things for the pleasure of sailing with you, Miss Brande," replied Lord Montressor, heartily, regarding the handsome creature before him with an honest admiration, free from the slightest alloy of covetousness. He could appreciate her noble beauty and unique attractions without the least wish to appropriate them.

This, Barbara instinctively knew. Hence her frank cordiality of friendship.

"Good, then! we are both well pleased," she said, laughing and extending her hand.

The preliminaries of the passage were then settled, and Lord Montressor seeing that the girl was excessively busy in superintending the taking in and stowing away of the freight, bade adieu, and returned to his hotel. And the third morning from this, being the twentieth of November, and a fine day, the Petrel, having on board Lord Montressor and his attendants, set sail for Liverpool.

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CHAPTER XXV.

THE GLORIOUS UNCERTAINTY OF THE LAW.

"There was on both sides much to say,
They'd hear the cause another day.
And so they did, and then a third
They heard it, and so kept their word.
But with demurrers and replies,
Long bills and answers filled with lies,
Delay, imparlance, and assoign,
The judges ne'er could issue join;
For many years the cause was spun,
And then stood where it first begun."—*Dean Swift.*

As all the readers of this true history may not acknowledge the same grand passion for the sea, possessed by Barbara Brande and her present biographer, I will spare them the description of the voyage to Liverpool, merely saying, by the way, that the passage was pleasant, quick, and prosperous. And that in five weeks from the day of sailing, the Petrel, on the twenty-fourth of December, Christmas eve, cast her anchor in the harbor of Liverpool.

A flood of business immediately overwhelmed Barbara.

Lord Montressor took leave of Miss Brande, and promising to see her soon again, he left the vessel, took a cab, drove to the Metropolitan Railway Depot threw himself on board the first train of cars, and steamed away to London, where he arrived early the same evening.

He directed his servants to convey his baggage to Gerard's Hall, Aleyn's Lane, then entered a carriage, and drove immediately to the bachelor establishment of Baron Dazzleright, in Berkely Square. He was very fortunate in finding Lord Dazzleright at home. He sent up his card and was shown into the library, where, in a very few minutes, he was joined by the advocate.

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Lord Dazzleright advanced, eagerly extending both hands, and saying—not only with his tongue, but with his eyes, his smile, and his whole attitude and expression—

"Good Heaven! my dear fellow, I am so glad to see you!"

And he grasped his lordship's hand and squeezed it, and without waiting for him to speak, asked, hurriedly—

"What was the last news you received from England, previous to setting out on your return?"

"News? None, except through the public prints. I have not had a letter from England since I left her shores."

"Why, how was that? We wrote frequently, anxiously."

"I suppose there was no chance of my receiving letters. I left England, as you know, about the middle of last June. I reached the United States the first of September; left it for the West Indies the tenth of October; reached Havana the first of November; left that port on the twentieth, and here I am!"

"Ah! I see how it is! You have run away from our letters, that have never been able to overtake you. But—first of all, have you seen *her*?"

"No."

"Have you heard of her?"

"I will tell you," said Lord Montressor. And forthwith he commenced and related the history of his long search and only partial success.

"Then we certainly have a clue that if firmly held and followed will lead to her recovery."

"We have a clue; but I am under parole, not to follow that clue until the decision of the Court of Arches is made known."

"Humph—humph—humph," muttered Lord Dazzleright —"and you know nothing?"

"Of her residence—no, nothing except that she lives in

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strict seclusion, and is believed to enjoy some degree of health and tranquillity."

"Ah! I was not just then thinking of *her*, though she generally occupies my thoughts to the exclusion of all other subjects."

"Of what then were you thinking?"

"Of what had occurred at this side of the water. But you say you have heard nothing?"

"Nothing, but public news through the public prints! What *can* you mean, my friend?"

"I will tell you! but sit down! sit down! Bless me, you have been standing hat in hand, like the collector for a charity, all this time! sit down."

Lord Montressor sank into a seat.

Lord Dazzleright went and pulled the bell-tassel, and when the next moment a servant entered he gave the brief order—

"Supper an hour hence, in this room." For Lord Dazzleright was one of those Englishmen who never could separate the idea of conversation from that of eating and drinking.

"Now then to business!" he said, returning and seating himself near Lord Montressor. "First permit me to congratulate you upon the fortunate circumstance that you *did not* succeed in meeting Estelle."

"Why, in the name of wonder, do you congratulate me upon any such misfortune?" inquired Lord Montressor, in astonishment.

"I deny that it *was* a misfortune! I contend that it was a providential blessing—and that the misfortune would have been to have met Estelle."

"Explain yourself! why should it have been such, to have found the beloved one whom I went to seek?"

"Because it might possibly have happened that that be-

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loved one, worn out by importunity, might have rejoined you."

"And what calamity would have followed then?" inquired Lord Montressor, ironically.

"Just, simply ruin!"

"RUIN!"

"Ruin; unless you like a stronger word better!"

"A stronger word!"

"Yes! there is such a one—listen!" and Lord Dazzleright uttered the single syllable—"shame!"—close to the ear of Lord Montressor, who started as if struck by a bullet.

"This is not so!" he said. "Come, my friend, let us leave exaggerated views of what might have been, and talk quietly of what *is*. In the first place—as you have heard—Monsieur L'Orient is dead."

"You are certain of it?"

"I was present when he was picked up from the sea identified his body and assisted at his funeral."

"He is therefore not likely to reappear and claim Estelle."

"I should think not!"

"But I had rather hear you say that you are *sure* not! After the lesson we received from that gentleman on the danger of taking things for granted, it is better that we should proceed only upon certainties.

"Then I am *sure* that Monsieur L'Orient will give us no more trouble."

"Very well then, *circumstances alter cases!* that fact of Monsieur L'Orient's ascertained decease changes the whole face of affairs, and the whole policy of proceeding!"

"I listen to hear further," said Lord Montressor.

"As Monsieur L'Orient can never reappear to claim his hapless victim, we must now go to work and establish the validity of his marriage with her."

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"*What!*"

"Certainly! To establish his marriage will not *now* be as *once* it would have been—to raise up an insurmountable obstacle to your own! since the same decision that will declare Estelle to have been Victoire's wife—will prove her now to be his widow."

"Yet still I do not see the necessity of pushing this affair through the Spiritual Court, since the decision of that court can in no degree alter the position of the facts as they now stand," said Lord Montressor, whose honest soul was concerned for realities rather than appearances.

"It is necessary to redeem the name of Estelle from unmerited reproach—nay, more, it is necessary for your own honor."

"I cannot feel that my honor or hers rests, or ever could rest, upon the chances of a decision of the Court of Arches, or any other court upon earth."

"Hem! you would not wish it said that you had married Monsieur Victoire L'Orient's ——"

"SILENCE, SIR!" thundered Lord Montressor, growing livid with emotion.

"—— Victim,—would you?" concluded Lord Dazzleright, heedless of the interruption.

"Dazzleright! Dazzleright! you abuse my forbearance."

"You would not like to have that said? I know you would not. But then, again, you had not looked at it in that light? I thought not. Now, however, you perceive that it is necessary for Estelle's sake, as well as for your own, that her name be redeemed from unmerited reproach by the establishment of the validity of the marriage! We must go to work as fast as we can and prove that, after which you may woo and wed the widow."

"Dazzleright! Dazzleright! you are usually styled the best lawyer in England!"

"Mine honorable friend, the best lawyer in England is he

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who best knows how to use the legal tools," replied Lord Dazzleright, laughing.

"You yourself took the ground that the childish marriage of Estelle was illegal—to use your own expression, entirely 'null, void, and of none effect!' You even *proved* it to be so!—proved it by law, testimony, and precedents!—proved it to the satisfaction of Sir James Allan Parke, of the Bishop of Exeter, of the Reverend Mr. Oldfield, and of myself!—in short, to the satisfaction of every body, except Estelle."

"Which you think would make it very awkward for me now to go to work and prove the same marriage to be perfectly legal, valid, and binding! to prove this by as strong 'law, testimony, and precedent!'—to prove it, if necessary, 'to the satisfaction of Sir James Allan Parke, of the Bishop of Exeter, of the Reverend Mr. Oldfield,' of yourself, and of all others, not excepting Estelle! Not at all. It will be the easiest thing in life! My dear sir, a lawyer who knows his business can, by a judicious application of 'law, testimony, and precedent,' prove or disprove any thing that he may be required to establish or to overthrow. In law, 'those who bind can loose,' those who loose can bind! I will undertake to establish before the Court of Arches, the marriage of Miss Morelle and Monsieur L'Orient to have been perfectly legal, binding, and indissoluble, except by crime or death!"

"Oh! Dazzleright! Dazzleright!"

"Of course, having once successfully assailed and overthrown that marriage before one court, I cannot consistently support it before another! But I can find a lawyer of talent and character, and can arm him with my argument, so that he shall be able to do it."

"Oh, Dazzleright! Dazzleright!"

"My conscientious client, you never worked your way up from the position of a provincial pettifogger's clerk to that

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of a Baron of the Exchequer, or you would certainly have learned something of the infinite possibilities of the law for those who know how to avail themselves of its advantages. The law is the most exact of all *sciences* in *theory*—the most uncertain of all *arts* in *practice*. All depends upon the application of its powers. In law, we can do or undo just what we please," said the best lawyer in England.

"Oh, Dazzleright! Dazzleright! well named Dazzleright!"

"Hist! here comes Johnson to lay the cloth for supper," said the Baron, as that functionary appeared.

Lord Montressor arose and paced up and down the floor, saying to himself—

"Thank God, my sweet Estelle knows nothing of this worldly wisdom, this doubling and twisting, this steering by expediency! She has no hand in it, is not responsible for it, is indeed totally ignorant of it. From first to last, through all this veering and trimming of others, *she* has held her pure, high, straightforward course, her path of duty, of self-denial, self-immolation!" And by contrast with these time-servers she seemed so true, so holy, and so lovely, that his feeling for her, took the form of prayer, and he stood in perfect silence before the window, until the cheery voice of Lord Dazzleright summoned him to the table.

"Tell me one thing!" said Lord Montressor as he took his seat at the board, "tell me for the satisfaction of my old friendship for you,—how you could conscientiously seek to overthrow Estelle's first marriage, unless you believed it to have been illegal?—and if you believe it to be so, how can you possibly seek now to establish it!"

"I will tell you—as you said, a lawyer's opinion or a Judge's decision cannot in the slightest degree alter the moral aspect of any case. Now the moral aspect of that case, to me, was this:—that no sinner should be allowed to

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take advantage of his own sin—that Monsieur Victoire should not be permitted to carry off a woman of whom he had so dishonestly possessed himself—if there was any law to prevent him from doing so! And of course I knew that there was plenty of law for that, as for most other purposes, good or evil. And I determined to use the law. As for the legal character of that marriage—there was so much to be said on both sides, that really, had my own feelings been disinterested, I should have found it difficult to have taken up with zeal, *either* side; but my sympathies were strongly enlisted, and I went to work with all my heart and soul to save Estelle from the talons of the vulture Victoire. Now that the bird of prey is dead—though neither the moral nor the legal aspect of that fatal marriage is altered by that circumstance, any more than it could be by the decision of a court—yet my policy is changed—it is now expedient, for the reasons heretofore stated, that I use the powers of the law to establish the validity of the marriage, which it was then expedient that I used the same powers to overthrow. Then I was compelled to choose between two evils—now I advocate a positive good."

"Thank God, Estelle is innocent of the knowledge of your policy! I can bear this system of expediency in *you*. I can even thank you for it, and admit that there is a sort of worldly wisdom in it! Nay, more—I can accept your congratulations upon my disappointment in failing to meet Estelle! And I can rejoice in the knowledge of never having passed one moment alone with her since our marriage ceremony! For, indeed, scarcely to save my own soul alive, would I bring upon her stricken young head one shadow of reproach! I will await the action of the Arches Court."

"And then?"

"If that court pronounce her first, infantile marriage to have been, as I was led to believe, illegal, it follows that the

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second one was legal, and that Estelle is my lawful wife. If, on the contrary, they adjudge it to have been valid—still by the death of L'Orient, Estelle is free—I should woo and wed her. That is all."

"Except that in the latter case, Estelle would be freed from the sign of blame!"

"She is free from that in either case! She was innocent of the intention of wrong doing!"

"Assuredly, but the world judges *acts*, not intentions."

Lord Montressor made a movement of impatience, and then said—

"Since L'Orient, at whose suit the action was brought before the Arches Court is dead—at whose instance is that suit now carried forward?"

"At her father's."

"At her father's!"

"At Sir Parke Morelle's."

"He has returned to England?"

"And to his right mind, which is better still."

"You amaze me! Is he reconciled to his unhappy young daughter, then?" inquired Lord Montressor, in astonishment.

"Easy—easy—do not be in a hurry. You said that Estelle was in Maryland, North America. Now, Sir Parke has but just returned from Italy, and is spending his Christmas at Hyde Hall, Devonshire. How is it possible they should be now reconciled?"

"By an epistolary correspondence I should think it might have been done."

"But it has not been done! Sir Parke does not even know where she is, or any thing of her movements since the trial, except that which we learned from yourself, namely, that she embarked for America. He is exceeding anxious for a meeting and a reconciliation with her. He is too proud and fastidious to advertise even with caution and

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disguise; but he has dispatched a confidential agent to America to seek her out."

"'A needle in a haystack!' Does he expect so to find her on that vast continent?" exclaimed Lord Montressor, impatiently, for he remembered that but for Sir Parke's unnatural severity and too late repentance, the poor, "stricken deer" might now be safe in the covert of her father's house.

"Yes! he hopes his agent will find her even on that 'vast continent!' Sir Parke, like most untraveled English country gentlemen, looks upon the 'vast continent' of America as a 'vast' wilderness, with only a few coast towns such as Boston, New York, and the like, whose population might be soon sifted by an intelligent 'detective.' That now, in spite of geography and newspapers, is the cherished idea of Sir Parke."

"Pshaw!"

Lord Dazzleright laughed.

Lord Montressor arose, and looked steadily into the eyes of the advocate.

"What do you suppose, Dazzleright, to be the cause of Sir Parke Morelle's change of feelings and purposes toward his daughter?"

"We might readily suppose Dame Nature to be the fundamental cause. Surely, his present relenting is more natural than his former severity toward her."

"Sir Parke is not a man to be governed by his natural affections."

"Perhaps not *always*. But in this case, what is left him but revision of his former sentence against Estelle? Has he any other daughter?—has he any son?—has he even a niece or nephew, or any other heir to his vast estate?"

"It is true he has not; you put the point pertinently. Yet, that circumstance alone would not sway his conduct! The opinion of the world is the breath of his nostrils."

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"Eureka! you have found it?"

"Then I am more confounded than ever! being at a great loss to know how his love of the world should move him in favor of her whom the world has forsaken."

"There you are mistaken. Most people *are* confounded, who reason from false premises. The world did not forsake Estelle! Estelle forsook the world; you pursued her in such hot haste, as not to have first discovered this fact?"

"What do you tell me!" exclaimed Lord Montressor, in a sort of glad surprise and incredulity.

"That there is not a woman in England more beloved and respected by those from whom love and respect are most valuable, than our Estelle."

"Dazzleright! this cannot be so! The world is not so just to the unfortunate."

"The world, like the devil, is not half so black as it is painted. 'Listen! reaction is commensurate with action.' It was inevitable, at first, when the suddenness and enormity of the charge brought against Estelle had shocked her friends and acquaintances ftom their propriety, that she should have been regarded with abhorrence. But when that panic was past; when people had time to become composed and thoughtful; and, above all, when the simple FACTS developed and proved upon the trial had replaced the exaggerated *fictions* of gossip; and when it was understood that Estelle had, from the moment of her arrest at the altar, reserved herself from the presence of Lord Montressor, and had, as soon as possible, withdrawn herself from his knowledge, there was a mighty reaction in her favor."

"Thank God! Oh, thank God for that! Thank God that the public were able to know Estelle and to do her justice!" exclaimed Lord Montressor, who, though in heart might despise the fluctuations of popular opinion for himself, yet dreaded it for Estelle.

"Thank God for all things, and the world for nothing."

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replied Dazzleright; "Estelle's whole life of goodness was not to be abrogated by one storm of calumny! That was a crisis in which the power of her own personal righteousness saved her. Your own name, character, reputation and popularity also served her well!"

"Whatever of good repute, or 'golden opinions' I possessed were at her service—were under her feet, if that would have saved them from the burning plow-shares!" said Lord Montressor, fervently.

"Unscorched she passed those fiery plow-shares. Her trial over, people judged her, in some sort, as you and I judge her. Her beautiful Christian life, the facts elicited on her trial, her subsequent self-sacrifice, all tended to draw back to her esteem and affection. All whose good opinion is worth having, love and revere her. Even the envious and malignant dare not traduce her, lest their motive become too apparent. And now I say, as I said in the beginning, there is not a woman in England more sincerely esteemed than Estelle. Sir Parke Morelle, restored in some degree to his reason, came back to find this state of feeling prevailing. It affected, it influenced, it governed him. He resolved to seek and call home his wandering child. If his resolution needed confirming, it received confirmation. Estelle's misfortunes had moved sympathy in the highest quarters—Sir Parke, and Lady Morelle attended the first drawing-room of the season. It was unusally brilliant, and so crowded that Royalty could vouchsafe but a word or two to each passing aspirant for notice. Lady Morelle's turn came; judge the effect when Queen Adelaide—her goodness is proverbial—inquired graciously after the health of Lady Morelle's daughter, expressing regret at not seeing her present! This was done for a purpose, and it effected its object. Ladies of the most ancient peerages—of a nobility indubitable and redoubtable, who can do as they please, because it is impossible for them to do wrong—followed

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now the royal lead. The more timid, though not less well-disposed, brought up the rear. You understand this was not done all at once at the drawing-room—though thence the fiat issued—thence the impetus was given. Even the most cowardly were not afraid to venture where Royalty had gone before!

"But Sir Parke! Lady Morelle! what reply could *they* make, good Heaven! when asked for their hapless daughter? Some such answer I suppose as Cain gave when asked for his brother!"

"Humph! they just replied that she was in America, and they had sent out a confidential agent there to seek her. Eh bien! you comprehend that the ordeal is well past!"

"Thank God!" fervently ejaculated Lord Montressor.

"Amen—and long live Queen Adelaide!" replied Dazzle right.

Lord Montressor looked around.

"What do you want?" inquired Lord Dazzleright.

"My hat."

"You are not going?"

"Yes."

"Oh, no! here are some famous cigars—stop and try them."

"Cannot. I am down into Devonshire by the midnight train! Good-bye!"

"But you are not going, certainly?"

"Absolutely and instantaneously. I shall not even first return to my hotel, as it is now eleven o'clock, and the Western train starts at twelve. So I will tax your kindness to send one of your men to Gerard's, to direct my people there to follow me by the next train, if you wil do me the favor."

"Certainly; but you have not said to what point in the great county of Devon I shall direct the fellows."

"You surely know! I am off to see Sir Parke Morelle

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at Hyde Hall. Tell them to put up at the 'Morelle Arm's, Hyde."

"Humph! Do you know that I was due there to eat a Christmas dinner to-morrow? So it may ensue that I shall follow you to assist at that grand pow-wow that must come off to-morrow evening."

'I shall be very well satisfied if you do! Shall I say to Sir Parke that you will come?"

"If you please?"

"Good-bye, then," said Lord Montressor, extending his hand.

"Bon voyage!" replied the other, pressing the proffered member.

And so the companions parted.

Lord Montressor re-entered the cab that had, during his visit, waited at the door, and gave the order:

"To Western Railway Depot."

The cabman drove on, and in due season reached this place.

Lord Montressor entered the cars, which were on the eve of starting, and soon found himself whirled onward toward the Western Grand Junction, which near day-break he reached.

Here he left the cars for the mail-coach that daily passed the village, which was the point of his destination.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

CHRISTMAS IN THE VILLAGE.

The misletoe hung in the castle hall,
The holly-branch shone on the old oak wall,
The baron's retainers were blithe and gay,
Keeping their Christmas holiday.
Oh! the misletoe bough!
Oh! the misletoe bough!"—*Old Song.*

THE sun was rising when the mail-coach arrived at the little hamlet of Hyde, and drew up before the "Morelle Arms."

Bright and gay with misletoe and holly was the little inn.

Busy and cheerful was the buxom little landlady. Bustling she hurried out to welcome any chance guests that the mail might have brought her. Evidently she expected some one—probably Lord Dazzleright, for Hyde Hall, so anxious and scrutinizing were the glances she sent into the interior of the coach. Her honest countenance beamed with joy at seeing Lord Montressor alight. Yet still she looked for some one to come after him.

No one followed. The stage-coach drove on.

The little landlady courtesied.

"Welcome back to Devonshire, my lord! Walk in, my lord! This way, my lord! Would your lordship choose breakfast?" she inquired, with busy, respectful solicitude.

Yes, his lordship would take breakfast, and afterward a post-chase to Hyde Hall.

The little landlady bustled out to obey his orders; and then bustled back again to lay the cloth for breakfast. Her cheerful face was now disturbed by anxiety. She cast furtive searching glances into Lord Montressor's thoughtful

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abstracted countenance—and quickly withdrew them in fear of discovery. In fact, the little body would have given the world, or at least her share in it—"Morelle Arms"—to have the privilege of inquiring after her nursling, Estelle. On observing Lord Montressor alight from the coach, she had naturally looked to see him hand *her* out, thinking that they were both together, and both going to spend Christmas with the lady's parents up at the Hall. She could not understand why "my lord" should be *en route* alone, to enjoy Christmas with her family, where she was not. It is true that many contradictory rumors had reached Hyde. But Dame Higgins doubted each and all, and now seeing Lord Montressor, she sighed for Estelle.

When the breakfast was ready she brought it in, and with the hope of hearing something indirectly of her "nurse child," she remained and waited on the table.

"Do you know, are the family at the Hall in their usual health, Mrs. Higgins?" inquired his lordship, as he received a cup of coffee from her hands.

"Ah, my lord, begging your lordship's pardon, is it like they should be well? Sir Parke is much broken, and Lady Morelle is not the handsome, youthful-looking woman that she was a year ago," said the landlady, shaking her head gravely.

Now Lord Montressor had not asked for, or expected this implied reflection upon the family misfortunes, on the part of Mother Higgins. He surmised in himself, a certain indiscretion in having made any inquiries whatever. He now made no comment upon her communication, but continued perfectly silent.

Not so the landlady. As his lordship had set the example of asking questions, she ventured to follow it.

"I hope my lady was in good health when your lordship came away?" said Mrs. Higgins, putting her question in the most polite—that is, in the affirmative, form.

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"I thank you—yes," replied Lord Montressor, in a tone and manner that forbade farther encroachments on the part of his hostess.

The little woman therefore occupied herself with waiting on her guest, and held her tongue until again she was spoken with.

"Can I have a chaise from this place to take me over to the Hall, Mrs. Higgins?" at length asked Lord Montressor.

"Indeed, your lordship, I am very sorry, but the chaise has gone to Horsford, this morning, to take over some Christmas visitors that came down from London last night, and it won't be back before noon," replied the landlady, with a look of real regret.

Horsford! How that name recalled the scene of the preliminary investigation. "Ah, Sir George Bannerman, that is a debt that remains to be settled," thought Lord Montressor.

Observing his lordship's deepened gravity, and attributing it to his disappointment in regard to the chaise, the hostess hastened to add—

"But, my lord, Jenkins has not yet gone home."

"Jenkins?—who may he be?"

"Yes, my lord, Jenkins—Sir Parke Morelle's man, who was sent here from the Hall this morning with the carriage to meet Lord Dazzleright, who didn't arrive."

"And Jenkins, you say, has not gone back with the carriage."

"No, my lord; he is in the kitchen at this present moment, having a rasher and a pot of ale."

"Very well. When Jenkins has finished his repast, be good enough to send him here," said Lord Montressor, rising from the table.

"I will, my lord," she replied, going out to obey

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In a few minutes, the coachman from Hyde Hall entered the presence of his lordship.

Here again was a recognition full of painful reminiscences! Jenkins was the gray-haired old man who had driven the carriage containing the bridal party, from the Hall to the church, on that fatal first of May. Lord Montressor had not seen him since that dark day.

The old man stood respectfully, hat in hand, waiting his lordship's commands.

"How do you do, Jenkins? I hope the family at the Hall are well?" were Lord Montressor's first words.

"Hem—m—m, as well as usual, I believe, my lord," replied the aged domestic, hesitatingly, though respectfully.

Lord Montressor then announced that he had come down to visit Sir Parke Morelle, and would be pleased to have a seat in the homeward-bound carriage.

The horses were feeding; but Jenkins would have them put to the carriage immediately; and bowing low, he went out to attend to the matter.

Lord Montressor then called for a room, paid such attention to his toilet as the circumstances admitted, then went below, settled his reckoning, and entered the carriage that waited to take him to Hyde Hall.

This was a fine, clear, bright winter morning. A light snow, that had fallen during the night, just covered the ground, and added to the cheerfulness of the scene. A slight frost, like the embroidering of fine pearls, just touched the trees.

The little village was already gay with Christmas revelings. Misletoe and holly decked many of the doors and windows of the houses each side of the only street, at the head of which stood the "Morelle Arms," and down which the carriage now drove. Neighbors hailed each other; children in troops ran gayly, with "Merry Christmas,"

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from dwelling to dwelling, or came out thence, with hands, hats, or pinafores, full of "goodies."

The carriage leaving the gay village street behind, passed on down the turnpike road leading through the common toward the park.

Just before turning in the great gate, they passed the little Gothic church, the scene of Estelle's fatal bridal and subsequent arrest. This was the most painful of all the reminiscences awakened by his return to the neighborhood. The little church was open, and was dressed within and without with mistletoe and holly. And some of the most devout among the parishioners had assembled thus early to assist at Divine worship, and were now walking about and conversing cheerfully in the churchyard, while waiting for the hour of service to arrive. Several of the old men took off their hats to his lordship, as the carriage passed.

But Lord Montressor could ill bear this scene with the graphic pictures of the past that it recalled. So bowing gently to their salutations, he quietly put up the blinds of the carriage, gave orders to drive faster, and then sunk back into his seat until they had entered the park.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

CHRISTMAS IN THE DESOLATE HOUSE.

"This holly by the mansion's bourne,
To-day, ungathered shall it stand,
She dwells within the stranger's land,
And strangely comes our Christmas morn.

"So neither song, nor game, nor feast,
Nor harp be touched, nor flute be blown,
Nor dance, nor motion, save alone
What lighteus in the lucid east."—*Tennyson.*

HAVING passed the park gates, the whole scene was changed. No sign of Christmas festivity was here. No winter wreath of mingled misletoe and holly arched the entrance. No gay troops of village children carolled their Christmas song as they went up to the Hall to receive from the steward their Christmas gifts of cakes and shillings. All was quiet, sombre, gloomy, as though a recent death in the family had put the household and premises into mourning. The carriage entered the park by the "winter drive," an avenue shaded entirely by gigantic evergreens, and for its continued verdure and close shelter used exclusively in the cold months by this comfort-loving family. Now these dark trees, with their branches meeting overhead, threw a funereal shadow over their way.

As they neared the Hall, the gloom deepened. The dark gray front of the mansion was closed and silent. The carriage drew up in front of the great portal. The coachman got down, opened the carriage door, dropped the steps, and Lord Montressor alighted.

The old man then went up and rang the bell, and to the grave footman that opened the door, said:

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"John, show his lordship into the black oak parlor, and ake his orders."

John bowed, and as the old coachman withdrew, closed the door behind him, turned and with another bow led the way to a small, snug, but gloomy little sitting-room on the same floor, stirred the fire, drew forward an easy chair, and leaving him comfortably seated, went to take up the card.

In a few moments, John returned with the request that the visitor would walk up, and straightway preceded him to the door of the morning room, which he opened, announcing—

"Lord Montressor."

Sir Parke and Lady Morelle were seated at opposite corners of the ample fire-place, in the grate of which burned a fine fire of seacoal.

Both were greatly and sadly changed. Worldliness might indeed have chilled their parental affections, and pride might have repressed all utterance of grief or mortification. But that they had suffered deeply, keenly, bitterly, was indelibly impressed upon their faces.

Sir Parke had grown bald and gray; his features were visibly sunken, his form perceptibly shrunken.

Lady Morelle's fair, classic face had lost its firm oval contour and delicate bloom, and was marked with a light tracery of lines about the brow and eyes.

But both retained their cold and stately self-control.

As Lord Montressor advanced, Sir Parke arose and offered him his hand, saying merely—

"I am glad to see you, Montressor."

"Thank you, Sir Parke; that is but just, since I come to you within twenty-four hours of my landing in England," replied the visitor, smiling. Then he passed on to Lady Morelle, who arose coldly and offered her hand.

"I hope I find your ladyship in your usual good health, this morning?"

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"I am well, sir, and am happy to welcome you back to England," she replied, sinking again upon her sofa to the left of the chimney. Sir Parke resumed his seat on the right of the same. And Lord Montressor took the comfortable easy chair that had been drawn up for him by the footman, in front of the glowing fire. And there he sat with the haughty and reserved baronet, on his right, and the cold and stately lady on his left,—all silent for a few minutes until Sir Parke bethought him to dismiss the footman.

When they were alone, Lord Montressor turned to the baronet, and plunging directly into the subject of all their secret thoughts, said:

"Sir Parke, it has given me the profoundest satisfaction to learn from Lord Dazzleright that you have relented toward your daughter."

The baronet's countenance never changed. He passed his hand once or twice across his thin and sunken lips and then said, slowly and composedly:

"That trial, sir, however deplorable and ever-to-be regretted in itself, nevertheless elicited facts that proved Estelle to be much less blameworthy than she at first appeared. Yes, sir. Such is the judgment of those who rule, and who should rule, public opinion."

To this sentiment Lord Montressor merely bowed while waiting to hear further.

"Estelle, sir, was but an infant, in bad hands, when she committed that fatal act of disobedience."

Lord Montressor could not exactly understand how Estelle had disobeyed her parents, in marrying Victoire, whom she had never been forbidden to marry; but he let it pass. Sir Parke continued in the same slow and composed manner—

"The calamities growing out of that unhappy event are

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not to be attributed as crimes to her—the greatest sufferer by them."

"I am glad you see it in this light, Sir Parke," said Lord Montressor, at the same time thinking within himself that it was a signal pity he could not have seen it so before borrowing old Queen Adelaide's spectacles.

"We have determined to establish the first marriage," said the baronet, with the cool confidence of an autocrat. "I have talked with my friend, the Archbishop of York, and he thinks with me that it is the only thing to be done."

"But—you are sure of your ground—you are certain that it can be done?"

Sir Parke put down the hand that had been caressing his own chin, turned upon the caviller a look of cool surprise, and said:

"Assuredly, sir. Can there be a question of it? The only obstacle to the validity of that childish union was the lack of my consent. Now I intend to leave it to be supposed that my silence all these years, was the silence of consent. Yes, sir. Had I known of, and felt an opposition to that marriage, I might have broken it up at first. That I failed to do so—from whatever cause—argues my consent. That I allowed it to exist unquestioned, up to the date of the legal majority of my daughter, establishes the marriage. So my friend, the Archhishop, views it. The affair will be heard in chambers. The Court is friendly to my interests. The decision will involve no question of property or of dower, only the honor of my house, which must be redeemed."

"When will the case come on?"

"Very soon. It will be the first cause taken up."

"You have not lately heard from your daughter?"

"Not since her departure for America. I, however, dispatched a messenger after her, from whom I am expecting

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to hear by every mail," replied Sir Parke, slightly betraying the great uneasiness he felt.

"Then I bring you the latest news of Estelle."

"Now both Sir Parke and Lady Morelle had expected this; but were both too cool and self-governed to hazard an inquiry, or manifest anxiety upon the subject.

At Lord Montressor's words, however, Lady Morelle raised her head, and Sir Parke answered:

"Ah, indeed; then I hope, my lord, that you will tell me she is well, and within reach of my agent."

"She was well when I left, and living in retirement, in Maryland."

Sir Parke bowed, and compressed his lips. Lady Morelle flushed, and averted her face. Self-controlled as they were, their increasing anxiety betrayed itself.

Lord Montressor understood its full meaning, and, with his usual straightforward candor, replied:

"Fear nothing, Sir Parke. Although when I left the shores of England in pursuit of Estelle, I believed her to be my lawful bride; yet, since affairs have taken this unexpected turn, I thank Heaven that I have not seen her from the day she left the protection of her aged pastor, and, mereover, that I had not passed one moment alone with her since leaving the altar."

"That is well," answered Sir Parke, coolly, and in no degree revealing that a great burden of anxiety had been lifted from his mind.

Lady Morelle's countenance resumed its slightly discomposed serenity.

"But it is only fair to inform the parents of Estelle, that when the decision of the Arches' Court is rendered, I shall become a candidate for her hand. Until that time, I am forbidden, of all, to seek her."

Sir Parke bent his head.

"You are right, my lord," he said.

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Lady Morelle now, also, for the first time, entered into the conversation, by saying—

"You informed us that Estelle was living in retirement, in some part of Maryland. Will you please to designate more exactly the place of her residence?"

"I cannot do so, Madam, since I am not advised of it. Had I been so, it is probable that I should not now be sitting among you."

"Your information, then, is not very precise or satisfactory."

"It is satisfactory, so far as it goes, Madam; though I admit it is not very precise. Permit me to explain;"—and Lord Montressor here related the circumstances of his acquaintance with Barbara Brande, together with the conversations he had held with her upon the subject of Estelle.

"But is this reliable? Is not Estelle the last woman in the world, even in her extremity, to make a confidante of such a she-savage?" inquired Sir Parke.

"Have I, then, been so unjust or incompetent as to give you *that* idea of Miss Brande?—a heroic Christian woman, if ever I saw one!" exclaimed Lord Montressor, warmly.

"A female sailor, at best. But let that pass, Montressor, since you are her apologist. Here comes John from the steward's room."

The footman now indeed appeared and announced—

"The tenants are all arrived, Sir Parke."

"Well!" said the baronet, rising with a dissatisfied air—'I suppose we must show ourselves to them—I suppose they came pouring in hither from the church, eh, John?"

"Church is just out, sir, and they have just dropped in to Mr. Thompson's room, to wish your honor a merry Christmas."

"And to drink a pipe of wine!—very good! Lady Morelle, will you go with me?"

"*I* thank you, no, Sir Parke," said her ladyship, shrug

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ging her graceful shoulders at the thought of meeting the heterogeneous company below.

"And you, Montressor?"

"I will attend you with pleasure, Sir Parke."

"Come, then! It is an old custom, to treat our tenants on Christmas day; and though I would have well dispensed with their company upon this occasion, and though nothing was said about their coming, you see they have not forgotten it," said the baronet, as they left the room.

"A time-honored custom, worthy to be observed, Sir Parke! and I hope indeed that my bailiff at Montressor is not forgetting my children there, at this present time," replied the young peer, who was indeed the patriarch of his own tenants and dependants.

"By the way, can you tell me why Dazzleright has not made his appearance?"

"He will be down by the noon train, Sir Parke."

"Ah, indeed, if that is so—John!"

"Yes, sir," said that functionary coming up.

"Tell Jenkins to put the greys to the carriage and go to the 'Arms' to wait for Lord Dazzleright."

"Yes, sir!" and this official disappeared.

They went down another flight of steps and entered the steward's room, where about fifty or sixty persons, men, women and children, were assembled.

The men were all standing for the want of sufficiency of seats to accommodate their numbers; and the women all sitting, with the children gathered at each mother's knee, to be kept out of mischief.

Four moderate-sized tables were set out and laden with huge loaves of bread and rounds of beef, great cheeses and mammoth seed-cakes—all veritable pieces of resistance.

In one corner, under the direction of the butler, stood two grinning footmen, surrounded by several hampers of wine, and flanked by a stand laden with glasses. One of these

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worthies was engaged in drawing corks, while the other filled the goblets on the stand.

At the opposite end of the room, with his firm feet planted upon the rug, and his broad, responsible back toward the fire, stood Mr. Thompson, the steward, to impose decorum by his magisterial presence.

Upon the entrance of the Lord of the Manor and his distinguished guest, this "decorum" grew more decorous—took a higher degree. The flunkies at the hampers stopped grinning. The men all bowed. The women all arose and courtesied.

Sir Parke received their homage graciously.

"I am happy to see you here as usual, my friends. Sit down all of you who can find seats; but you will give the women the preference, I know——Thompson, see that our good friends lack nothing. Brodie, mind that you do not spare the cellars," said the baronet.

A few of the elder and more privileged among the tenants now advanced, bowed to the guest, and shook hands with their landlord, wishing both—

"A merry Christmas and many happy returns of the same."

The first course of wine was then served around. And a grey-haired tenant arose in his place and proposed—

"Our honored landlord, his family, and his guests—may everlasting happiness be theirs!"

The toast was heartily taken up and drank with enthusiasm—for just at Christmas Sir Parke Morelle and his lady were well liked by their dependants—or if they were not, their Christmas cheer *was*, which answered the same purpose.

When the uproar of the toast-drinking had subsided, the baronet and his visitor, wishing the assembled people health and prosperity, withdrew, leaving them to their repast.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE EVENING FEAST.

"Come to the festal board to-night,
For bright-eyed beauty will be there,
Her coral lips in nectar steeped,
And garlanded her hair.

"But where is she whose diamon'd eyes
Golconda's purest gems outshine?
Whose roseate lips of Eden breathed,
Say, where is she, the beauteous one?"

Thomas Dunn English.

The gentlemen then went to the drawing-room, whither Lady Morelle, in full dinner dress, had already preceded them. And here Lord Montressor learned that other guests were then staying at the house—a fact that he never could have supposed from the gloomy aspect of the place. However they were soon joined by her grace, the old Duchess of Graveminster, with her grand-daughters, the ladies Jane and Mary Chappelle, and oh! "tell it not in Gath! publish it not in the gates of Askelon!"—by Lord and Lady Monson, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Kennaugh, and Mrs. Bute Trevor!—ladies who, in Lady Bannerman's boudoir, had been the most unsparing in their denunciation of the beautiful Estelle, the only daughter of that house, whose hospitality they now sought! Does the reader wonder at this? No, he does not! He or she knows this double dealing to be the way of too many people in this world of ours, and will not therefore wonder even when I affirm that these were almost self-invited guests, a party made up to please themselves, and through the medium of the Duchess of Graveminster, all but

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forced upon the hospitalities of Hyde Hall. For in truth, neither the baronet nor his lady were in the slightest degree disposed to entertain a Christmas party at their sorrowful house.

Late in the afternoon Lord Montressor's valet came in a post-chaise from the "Morelle Arms," with his master's portmanteau and dressing-case—conveniences that were growing imminently necessary; for in truth his lordship's toilet, by reason of his hasty journey, was in a very unlordly plight.

A little latter in the evening Lord Dazzleright arrived by the carriage that had been sent for him, and just in time to dress for dinner.

That Christmas feast was served by candle-light at six o'clock.

A distinguished company gathered around the board, but something was felt to be wanting! Where was she, the heiress of that house, the father's pride, who should have been the "star of that goodlie companie"? Missing, gone, lost! And though many splendid chandeliers flashed down their rainbow radiance over the festive scene, they would not compensate for that light withdrawn. All felt the gloom and shadow of her absence. And very dull would have been this dinner party, but for the presence of the brilliant conversationist, Baron Dazzleright. Sir Parke Morelle understood his value upon these occasions, and therefore, when in a manner compelled to invite this Christmas party to his gloomy house, had, for this reason, among others, pressed Lord Dazzleright to come down to Hyde. Witty, sparkling, sarcastic, caustic, he was the right sort of biting acid to throw into the alkali of this flat set, to sting them into life and effervescence. And he did it. The conversation prospered—the jest, the jibe, the repartee, and the laugh went around. When the ladies had retired from the table, the festivity turned to revelry,

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and laughter, song and toast went around for an hour longer.

Then, in good time, they joined Lady Morelle and her companions in the drawing-room, where coffee was served. And there still was Lord Dazzleright "the life of the company." He was but thirty-five years old, handsome, talented, witty, distinguished, wealthy, titled, and—unmarried! consequently he was the worshiped of all young widows, virgins, and maneuvring mammas. In the first part of the evening he distributed his services very equally among the ladies present; but, in the latter part, divided his attentions between the two ladies Chappelle; and, last of all, confined his devotions to the pretty widow, Mrs. Bute Trevor.

When the hour for retiring had arrived, Lord Dazzleright bowed out every guest before he bid Sir Parke and Lady Morelle good-night. And after these Herculean labors, these unheard-of exertions, he bowed *himself* out, and, with a weary air, followed up stairs the footman who was appointed to show him his sleeping-room.

"Where is Lord Montressor's chamber?" he inquired of this functionary, as soon as he had dragged himself up one flight of stairs, and paused in the hall of the second floor.

"There, sir, just opposite your own," replied John.

"Go, then, you needn't wait."

John touched his forelock and retired.

"Let me in! Let me in!" exclaimed the lion of the evening, roaring rather peremptorily at the door of Lord Montressor's apartment.

His lordship himself opened the door, and appeared with a look of surprise on his face.

"What! has your fellow gone to bed, Montressor?"

"He has not come up from the servants' hall yet. But what upon earth ails you?—fatigued with your exertions,

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or borne down under the weight of your laurels—which? You look, at once, as weary and as triumphat as 'a warrior who putteth off his armor.' What is it?" inquired Montressor.

Dazzleright threw himself into a chair, exclaiming—

"Oh! these women! these women!"

"What women?"

"These fine ladies! It is a weariness of the soul to try to entertain them for one evening!"

"Ah! and now I look at you more closely, it is not triumphant but desperate that you look."

"I am just a little excited! and if some of these are not taken away to-morrow morning, I shall elope!—that is all!" exclaimed Dazzleright, drawing out his pocket-handkerchief, and wiping his heated brow.

"With whom?" coolly inquired Lord Montressor.

"Montressor, don't aggravate my symptoms! I am in a considerable state of nervous excitement."

"The truth is, that you suffer from what the French wittily call the 'embarrassment of riches.' You do not know how to choose between the fair Lady Jane or Mary Chappelle, and the pretty Mrs. Bute Trevor.

"Where are my pistols? If I had them at hand I might do something indiscreet—the ladies Chappel and Mrs. Bute Trevor! two inane, characterless girls, and a flat, spiritless widow! I had as leave wed one of Madame Tousaud's wax images as either."

"You are severe; they are what are called 'harmoniously developed women,' answered Lord Montressor, with the least possible of quiet humor.

"Then, in the name of all life, give me monsters!" broke forth Dazzleright, with energy. "Bah—bah—bah—bah—they are as like each other, and as like all their class, as peas in a pod. I beg the peas pardon—peas have life——these women are as uniform, as dull, as dead, and as

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heavy as leaden bullets from the same mould; with no more originality, individuality, life, power than the leaden balls aforesaid! By my soul, they are so uniform, that each should be ticketed with her name, that we may know her from her fellows."

"Chut! you have received a flat from Lady Jane or Mary Chappelle," laughed Lord Montressor.

"*I* received a flat! No! and I never shall from any fine lady. I have been trying to entertain a score of flats, that's it."

"You will marry Mrs. Bute Trevor, yet," persisted Lord Montressor.

"I'll marry an Indian squaw. Civilized women are degenerated—besides, being so much alike that I can't tell one from another!" exclaimed Dazzleright, bouncing out of the room.

The next day was the Sabbath, and the family and their visitors attended Divine service at the little Gothic chapel outside the park gate.

On Monday Lord Dazzleright put his threat in execution and rather than spend another evening in the arduous and unprofitable labor of trying to leaven lead, took leave of his friends and departed, telling no one the fact that imperative business called him back to town.

On the second of January, the Christmas party broke up, and the guests left the sombre shades of Hyde Hall, to seek more cheerful scenes.

On the evening of the same date, Lord Montressor, accompanied by Sir Parke Morelle, took the up train to London, where they arrived the next morning at day-break, and proceeded immediately by appointment, to the house of Lord Dazzleright, on Berkley Square.

It was time they had come. The Arches Court was sitting, and the question of the L'Orient marriage was before it. Sir Parke Morelle used all his powerful connection and

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social influence, and Lord Dazzleright devoted his great legal abilities to bring about the desired decision. And after a session of ten days—shall we also say, after a deliberate, careful, and impartial investigation?—that decision was rendered.

That decision established the validity of the marriage.

Lord Dazzleright laughed aloud when he heard it.

Sir Parke Morelle received the news with the composure of a man who was prepared to expect nothing else.

But Lord Montressor turned pale, he was thinking how perilously uncertain are the dearest interests in life, when their permanency may be shown to depend upon the merest legal quibbles! he was remembering how nearly, in his blind devotion, he had fatally compromised Estelle; he was thanking Heaven that her pure instinct had been a safer guide than all his power of intellect.

The three gentlemen consulted upon the question of what should be their next step. All agreed that it was better they should wait no longer to hear from the agent who had been dispatched to America in quest of Estelle; but that Lord Montressor should get all the information he could possibly obtain from Barbara Brande; after which his lordship should accompany Sir Parke Morelle on a voyage to the United States in search of the missing one.

This plan having been determined upon, Sir Parke hurried down into Devonshire, to have his wardrobe packed up, his purse replenished, and to bid adieu to his lady; meanwhile leaving Lord Montressor in London to wait for Barbara Brande, whose vessel had crossed the Channel, but was daily expected back.

Almost every day Lord Montressor went down to St. Catherine's Docks to inquire for the Petrel. At length his perseverance was rewarded.

One day he went down to the dock, accompanied by

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Lord Dazzleright, and was so fortunate as to spy the Petrel, anchored some distance down the river.

Hailing a waterman, he hired his boat to take himself and friend to that vessel. They entered the boat, and in a very few minutes were rowed out and brought up alongside the little craft.

The Petrel, as usual, was in the nicest possible trim. Her snow-white sails were neatly clewed up; her clean ropes were carefully coiled away; her deck was newly scrubbed; her painted doors and ports freshly washed, and very bright; and every scrap of metal about her body shining like gold and silver. A Sabbath stillness reigned aboard. Two boys, neatly dressed in sailor's costume, had charge of the deck.

As Lord Montressor and his friend came up the starboard gangway, the elder of these boys walked forward and took off his hat.

"Ah! this is my friend, Willful Brande," said Lord Montressor, taking his hand, cordially shaking it, and then presenting him to Lord Dazzleright.

"Where is your sister, my lad?" inquired Montressor.

"Gone up to Manchester to see if she can make a better bargain for cotton goods with the manufacturer."

"Indeed! Why, when did she go?"

"Yesterday morning."

"Really? Why, I thought that you were just in?"

"No, sir; we cast anchor yesterday at sunrise. Sister left for Manchester at about eleven o'clock."

"And when do you expect her home?"

"Every moment. She promised to be back to-day by the midday train, and sister never disappoints us. It is now past noon, and we may look for her every minute. There she is now! I said so!" exclaimed the boy, in sudden joy, pointing to a boat well laden, and having besides

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one female passenger, and which was just pushing off from the shore.

They followed the direction of his finger, and recognized Barbara seated among many bales of what seemed dry goods.

"Who takes care of the craft while your sister is away?"

"I do—but Nep and Jack do any heavy work that is needed; and Climene, sister's woman-servant, cooks for us. And then sister never leaves us for more than one day at a time."

Lord Montressor now went to speak to the younger lad, who was sitting under the shade of the foresail, reading.

"What are you studying, my lad?"

"It is," said the boy, turning to the back of the book to give the title more accurately, "'The Manners and Customs of Different Nations,' a book that Mrs. Estel's woman made me a present of."

"Mrs. Estel!" exclaimed Lord Montressor, exchanging glances with Dazzleright, who had just come up to his side.

"Yes, sir, Mrs. Estel—the lady who leased the Head land from sister."

A sudden light broke on both gentlemen.

"Fool that I was, not to have guessed before that the recluse lady who was Miss Brande's tenant, could have been none other than our lost Estelle!" said Lord Montressor to himself.

He took Dazzleright's arm and walked aft.

"There will now be no necessity to urge Miss Brande to a revelation that she might consider a breach of faith, and refuse to make. Providence has put us in possession of the retreat of Estelle. We will therefore make no further inquiries upon that subject; but engage passage to Baltimore, and when we get opposite to the Headland, go on shore to seek Estelle in the old house."

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"Yes, that is a good plan—— Look at that fine creature!" exclaimed Lord Dazzleright, suddenly breaking off and pointing to a young woman in a gray serge dress, who was just coming up the starboard gangway.

It was Barbara Brande, who was looking in high health and beauty. No adventitious arts of the toilet lent their aid to this brave and gentle daughter of the ocean—a gown, a large sacque and hood, all of dark gray, comprised her outside garments. But the hood was rolled back, revealing the handsome, spirited face, with its bands of shining, jet black hair, parted and rippling in waves down each side of her broad forehead and damask cheeks, and the strong, flashing black eyes, that at a glance seemed to take in the whole deck with every detail thereon.

"Willful! call the hands up to haul in freight," were her first words of command, delivered in her own clear, ringing, resonant voice.

As the boy sprang to obey, Barbara walked aft to receive her visitors.

"You perceive that I render myself according to promise, Miss Brande," said Lord Montressor.

"I am happy to see you again, sir."

"This is my friend, Lord Dazzleright," said Lord Montressor, presenting his companion.

"How do you do, sir?" said Barbara, then breaking off suddenly, before Dazzleright could get off his handsomely-turned reply, she called out—"Boys, look alive there! You will not get the freight in to-day at this rate! Willful! take the little boat and go ashore to hurry those watermen with those other bales. Paul, bear a hand there! Now, gentlemen, I am at your service! What can I do for you?" she inquired, turning to her visitors to give them her full attention.

But Lord Dazzleright felt piqued and turned away. Evidently the handsome creature, the child of the sea, cared no

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more for this Baron of the Exchequer, this brilliant conversationist, this lion of the London salons—in a word, for this Lord Dazzleright, than she did for any other honest man! Here was an unsophisticated savage. What did the young woman mean? he asked himself. Had she eyes? Had she sense?

While Lord Dazzleright sulked at being unconsciously snubbed by the handsome Amazon, Lord Montressor opened his business. First he told her that the Court of Arches had established the L'Orient marriage.

Barbara bowed—she had expected as much.

"Consequently," he went on to say, "Sir Parke and myself go to America to find Estelle."

"That is right," Barbara answered.

"Can Miss Brande give us a passage to Baltimore?"

"Yes, with pleasure."

"Will you also give the address of Estelle?"

"No, as that would be a breach of confidence; but I will go to the lady and entreat her permission to inform you."

Lord Montressor smiled, and said that would do.

The arrangements for the passage of Sir Parke Morelle, of himself, and a single servant for each, were forthwith completed.

And then, as the boats with the freight, under charge of Willful, had arrived, and Miss Brande was thronged with business, the two gentlemen took their leave.

"What do you think of that young merchant-captain," inquired Lord Montressor, as they were rowed from the side of the vessel.

"Barbara?—well named! A young Barbarian she is!" exclaimed Lord Dazzleright, angrily.

Lord Montressor smiled.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

BARBARA MAY BE A BARONESS.

"O! she is a golden girl!
But a man, a MAN should woo her,
And when she seems to fly away,
He should like storms pursue her!"—*Anonymous.*

THE next morning, Sir Parke Morelle, with his favorite servant and his baggage, made up for a long sea voyage, arrived from Devonshire. When informed that passage for the party had been engaged on Miss Brande's vessel, the Petrel, he at first demurred at the idea of risking their lives in a craft commanded by a woman. But in the course of half an hour's conversation, Lord Montressor convinced him that the inevitable dangers of a sea-voyage could in no way be enhanced to them through their sailing with Barbara Brande, who was, in all respects, admirably well adapted to her chosen position.

His lordship then imparted to the Baronet the fact of their accidental discovery of Estelle's place of abode, and also of their fixed resolution to keep that discovery a secret until they should arrive at the Headland—a plan that the baronet heartily approved.

Lord Dazzleright rendered himself very officious and busy! Never was so zealous and serviceable a friend. He insisted that Sir Parke and Montressor had quite enough business to occupy them on shore, and that he himself should see to the embarkation of their baggage. But Lord Dazzleright, assuredly, proved himself incompetent, or else willfully negligent of his self-assumed duties; for the manner in which he contrived to spread the business of one day over

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an entire week, was highly exasperating to the prompt and energetic Barbara. For instance, one day he would see a trunk safely on board, and, having done so, would remain on deck by the hour, watching that handsome, falcon-eyed, commanding young Amazon, who had no time to talk to him; who took no notice of him; in short, who cared no more for *him*—Lord Dazzleright—than she did for the old waterman that had brought him to the vessel, or for any other decent poor man. This sort of indifference was something new to the lion of the London salons! It was novel, piquant, provoking, incomprehensible. He mentally termed her a barbarian, without capacity for appreciating a handsome, brilliant Baron of the Exchequer! Nevertheless, upon the pretext of seeing safely on board the vessel some trunk, box, packet or hamper, he visited the Petrel every day. And he was always treated in something like the following cavalier style. Hat in hand, he would step on deck,—where he ever found Barbara busily engaged—and, walking up to her, would say—

"Good-morning, Miss Brande! I have brought some boxes belonging to my friend, Sir Parke."

"Good-morning, sir—Willful! here! see to getting up this gentleman's freight!" and without another word, away she would go to attend to some other matters, in some other part of the vessel—unceremoniously leaving "the observed of all observers" of the fashionable drawing-rooms to bite his nails for vexation on the deck of the vessel. He called her "A savage! positively, a young savage! destitute of the very first principles of civilization!"—notwithstanding which, under the pretense of taking excellent care of some precious piece of baggage or other, he continued his daily visits to the Petrel. Barbara's patience, that had lasted six days of the week, gave way on the seventh, "which was the Sabbath," when she saw at the usual hour a boat come

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alongside, containing Lord Dazzleright and a quarter cask.

"Good-morning, Miss Brande," he said, as he stepped on deck. "This is some pure port wine, for Sir Parke's own use——"

"Good-morning, sir!" said Barbara, shortly—"Willful! see that this wine is got up and stowed away."

Then, turning to Lord Dazzleright, she said, with great severity—

"Sir, this is the first time that I have ever received freight on board my vessel upon the Sabbath day, and I hope it will be the last; and I only take it in now rather than send you back with it."

"The inconceivable young bearess!" thought Lord Dazzleright, but to her he said—"I am very sorry, Miss Brande, I did not know your rule."

"Sir, the rule was not one of my making; it was not I who wrote—'Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day.'"

"I beg pardon—pray forgive me," said the Baron very humbly.

"Ask pardon, sir, of Him whose commandment you have set at naught."

"The exasperating young Barbarian! I wonder if I should have got a sharper sermon on Sabbath-breaking, or received a better lesson on humility, in any chapel in London," said the Baron to himself.

"Is there any thing else to come on board?" asked Barbara.

"To-day?—no, Miss Brande."

"To-morrow, then?"

"Yes, Miss Brande, there are Lord Montressor's trunks."

"Well, suppose that you just permit Lord Montressor's servants to complete this business of transportation. I think

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they understand the work better, and will get through it sooner," said Barbara bluntly turning away.

"Miss Brande," exclaimed Dazzleright, going after her, "I was presented to you by our mutual friend, Lord Montressor. My character and position are not unknown to you. I hope, in addition to that, you believe me to be an honest and well-meaning man. I trust therefore that you will not be offended when I confess to you, that the great esteem and respect with which you have inspired me, brings me daily to the Petrel. If there were any more regular way of approaching you, I should gladly avail myself of it—as it is—I am forced to this, hoping to cultivate your acquaintance."

"With what view?" inquired Barbara, coolly turning and facing him.

"With the view that we may become better friends, Miss Brande."

"You are mad," said Barbara, walking away and leaving him to digest this "flat."

"I AM!" exclaimed Dazzleright, in a rage, as he went to the starboard gangway and beckoned the waterman to bring his boat alongside. As he descended into that boat he heard her clear ringing voice—commanding—

"Willful! call all hands on deck. I am going to read the Morning Service."

"Umph! Umph! oh-h-h!" muttered Lord Dazzleright, in a succession of inward grunts. "What a young barbarian! Excepting that she seems an orthodox Christian, she is a most unmitigated young savage! She appears to have no more appreciation of social advantages than a sword-fish—which in character she resembles! Did the young Vandal know that a possibility—a mere possibility was hinted—that she might become Lady Dazzleright?" So angry was the Baron, that on landing, he went straight to Lord Montressor and informed him that his lordship's

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servants would have to see to the embarkation of the remainder of the baggage. And from that day, Lord Dazzleright went no more with box or bundle to the Petrel.

But, nevertheless, upon the day before she was expected to sail—without having informed his friends of his intention—Lord Dazzleright boarded the Petrel, desired to see the "Captain," expressed his wish to take passage to America, and inquired if he could have a berth on that vessel; Barbara informed him plainly that he could *not*, that the cabin was already inconveniently crowded.

Whereupon Lord Dazzleright expressed his willingness to put up with a hammock swung anywhere—in the steerage for instance.

Barbara told him there was not a hammock to spare.

Then would Miss Brande take him as freight? he asked, smilingly.

No—the hold was packed from keel to deck, and could not stow another hundred-weight.

"Well! Miss Brande would not certainly be so unkind as to refuse him a roost on the rigging; he could sleep on the top," he persevered.

"Lord Dazzleright, since you force me to say it, there is not an inch of space on board the Petrel at your disposal. Furthermore, under any circumstances, I should decline you as a passenger. Nor is it possible that you can ever have a berth in my vessel unless you should chance to be shipwrecked in our sight, in which case we should be obliged to pick you up," said Barbara, with great severity.

"Then I'll go and get myself shipwrecked forthwith!' exclaimed Lord Dazzleright.

"You perceive now, sir, I am busy. Good-morning. Avast there, Paul! what are you about!" and suddenly breaking off, Barbara hurried forward to look after her hands.

"A Barbarian! a Savage! a Goth! a Vandal! a Can-

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nibal! a Bearess! and the handsomest, most piquant, and provoking young creature I ever met with in my life! Upon my honor, I do not know which is the most inexplicable—that I should become infatuated with this young woman, or that she should repulse me! By my life, I do not understand it, unless she is rabid and has bitten me, and I am in process of becoming mad!" said the "glass of fashion," as with a crest-fallen air he dropped himself into the boat and was rowed to the shore.

The same evening it happened that Lord Dazzleright attended a ball at Almacks, where he was as usual the "cynosure of neighboring eyes," the rich prey for which maneuvering mammas laid their plans, and mincing maidens laid their nets.

But with the usual perversity of human nature, Baron Dazzleright obstinately refused to become enamored of any willing Lady Clara or Geraldine among them, and perseveringly sighed after the dark-browed, eagle-eyed, lion-hearted girl of the sea, who cared less for his baronial coronet than for her little brother's tarpaulin hat; less for the title Baroness than for that of Sister Barbara; and still less to follow the phantom of pleasure through the mazes of fashion than to guide her "Stormy Petrel" through the wild waves of the pathless ocean!

But if this Vesta of the sea was all sufficient unto herself,—her admirer was no longer independent of her. She had revealed to him a phase of character as attractive, as fascinating, as it was novel and unparalleled! Compared with the vapid, insipid, insincere butterflies of fashion, this Barbara Brande was so full of vital force, of truth, courage, independence, and self-reliance! To crown all, she was a real and thoroughly conscientious Christian. He could not choose but think of her, and the longer he reflected, the more he approved and admired her.

Leaving Almacks at an early hour, he went to Gerard's

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to seek Lord Montressor, whom he found busily engaged in writing.

"Ah, you are occupied. I will not disturb you."

"No—only writing to Slater, my bailiff, at Montressor; I have done now," said his lordship, rapidly folding, directing, and sealing the letter. "Now I am at your service."

Lord Dazzleright threw himself into a chair, and cast his hat into a corner.

"What is it? What can I do for you, Dazzleright?"

"You are going on board to-morrow. You are in the confidence of Miss Brande. You will be in her company for some two or three months. Just use that opportunity to impress upon her rather hard head, that your friend Dazzleright is a well-meaning man, not utterly unworthy of her consideration, even if he *has* had the misfortune to be successful in life!"

"Why?"

"Because if ever I marry a woman—her name will be Barbara Brande!"

"Eh!"

"If ever I marry a woman her name will be Barbara Brande."

"You are mad!"

"Just what she said! But—if ever I marry a woman, her name will be Barbara Brande! Now I will tell you what I want you to do—just let her know in a delicate manner, that I am an honest man, who, in spite of his coronet, is not totally beneath her notice."

"Prove that to her yourself in person."

"Ahem! I think I see her giving me the opportunity! My friend, as long as I keep a *very* respectful distance, and merely touch my hat on meeting her, Miss Brande treats me with the same decent civility that she accords to the boatmen, hucksters and porters of the Docks. But just as soon as I presume to advance and aspire to a higher degree

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of consideration, she puts me down as quietly as though I were the Tom, Dick or Harry aforesaid. And when I gave her to understand the honesty of my 'intentions,' as the dowagers would say—she told me I was mad."

"Miss Brande was right in repulsing you. What has the all-accomplished, all-praised Baron Dazzleright in common with that free, wild, irresponsible maiden of the ocean?"

"What?—nothing at all, of course! And that is the very reason why he wants her, and why he must have her as the complement of himself. Every quality of Barbara's nature will become a new possession to me."

"But the difference of rank——"

"*Peste!* am I not 'a son of the people,' as the French would say? Should I not take to wife 'a daughter of the people? And, in one word, if I cannot get Barbara Brande to help me found a noble dynasty—why, then, the first Lord Dazzleright will also be the last of his illustrious line!"

Lord Montressor arose and clapped his hand into the palm of his friend's, saying cordially:

"You are right! I did but try you! You are altogether right! And *she* was also right in repelling your advances—for great reserve and firm repulsion are ever necessary as shield and lance for a woman in her strange position. But—barring your professional quibbling—you are worthy of her, and if I do not find a way of convincing her of that fact—and smoothing the path for your next overtures—why you may then set me down as as an incompetent diplomatist, that is all."

"I thank you, Montressor. Well, that is just all I had to say to you for this evening. I will not keep you out of bed any longer, for you will have to rise early to be on board in time, as the vessel sails with the early tide. The sky promises fine weather for to-morrow," said Dazzleright, going to the window and looking out. "Well, Heaven

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grant it! Good-night, my friend!" he exclaimed, returning and offering his hand.

"Good-night, Dazzleright—but not good-bye," answered Montressor, cordially pressing his offered hand.

"Oh, no, no! certainly not! I shall meet you at St. Catherine's Docks to-morrow morning, and say good-bye only on the deck of the Petrel. "*Au revoir!*"

"To our meeting!"

CHAPTER XXX.

CAPTAIN BARBARA'S SECOND VOYAGE.

"O'er the glad waters of the dark-blue sea!
Our thoughts as boundless and our souls as free!
Far as the breeze can bear the billows' foam,
Survey our empire and behold our home!

"Oh, who can tell, save one whose heart has tried,
And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,
The exulting sense—the pulse's maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way."—*Byron.*

THE next day was the fourteenth of February, and St. Valentine's day, and of all the three hundred and sixty-five, the luckiest for lovers' enterprise. The weather was as fine as it had promised to be, with a clear sky, a soft air, and light breeze from the south, heralding an early spring.

Soon after sunrise, Sir Parke Morelle and Lord Montressor drove down to the docks, where they found Lord Dazzleright already awaiting them. Willful Brande was also in attendance, with the long boat from the Petrel, to take the party to the vessel,

After a general greeting and shaking of hands, they entered the long boat and were rowed to the barque.

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The Petrel was, as always, neat and clean as a dainty maiden in her May-day dress.

The few hands were all at their posts.

Barbara walked the deck, overseeing the final arrangements, and issuing her orders. She paused at the starboard gangway to receive her passengers; but frowned slightly when she recognized Lord Dazzleright among them. But since the baron understood her reserve, he was not discomposed.

"We are ready, and the tide is on the ebb; we only waited to ship you before weighing anchor," she said cordially offering her hand to Lord Montressor, and bowing to the two other gentlemen.

"So that I shall be obliged to take immediate leave of my friends and hurry back," said Lord Dazzleright, who had not been addressed.

"Yes, sir," said Barbara, curtly turning away—"Willful! have the long-boat hauled up and made fast," she commanded. Then to Lord Montressor and Sir Parke she said:

"Gentlemen, accommodate yourselves, if you please. You know your quarters in my cabin, or if you prefer the leck there are pleasant seats in the stern."

They bowed and begged her not to incommode herself, as they would take care of themselves. As the men had now hauled up the long boat and secured it to the davits, Lord Dazzleright began to blame his rashness, and wonder how he should get back to the shore.

Barbara immediately relieved him of his dilemma by taking her speaking trumpet, going to the side of the vessel and hailing an idle wherry from the shore.

"Boat ahoy!—come alongside to take a passenger off!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" sung out the waterman, who began to ply his oars, swiftly propelling the boat in the direction of the vessel. While it was coming, poor Dazzleright shook

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hands with his friends, wishing them a good voyage, and then turned to look for Barbara. She had gone forward and was standing there to give orders.

"All hands to the windlass! And you, Willful, to the wheel!"

She was obeyed on the instant, and the men and boys stood waiting further commands.

She paused, for Lord Dazzlewright approached her—took her hand and said respectfully:

"Good-bye, and a good voyage to you, Miss Brande! You are severe and even unjust to me; but you will know me better; I can wait for that; God bless you and yours!"

"Heaven save you, sir! Good-bye!" said Barbara, in a somewhat softer voice, thinking that in this parting hour she could safely relax her rigor. He understood and refrained from presuming on this new kindness; but immediately went to the starboard gangway and descended into the boat, waiting there to receive him.

"Up anchor!" shouted Barbara, as she saw the wherry push off.

And while the men laid themselves to the windlass, and heaved with all their strength, Lord Dazzleright stood waving his hat from the receding boat. On reaching the shore, with a last wave of adieu, responded to from the decks of the vessel, Lord Dazzleright's boat disappeared in the crowd at the docks.

The anchor was soon up, the sails all set, and the Petrel stood gallantly out for the mouth of the river.

When the vessel was thus fairly under way, Barbara walked aft to speak to her passengers.

Sir Parke Morelle met her half way. Sir Parke looked pale and unnerved. He had never made a sea voyage further than from Dover to Calais, or from Liverpool to Cork, in all his life, and to begin at his age to cross the Atlantic ocean, in such an egg-shell as the Petrel, with such an ex

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traordinary captain as this young girl, was, notwithstanding the opinion of Montressor,—"indiscreet—to say the least, indiscreet." He had stepped upon the planks of the deck with feelings fearfully akin to those of a condemned criminal stepping upon the flooring of a scaffold. He had watched Barbara walking fore and aft giving her orders as though she had been the sheriff giving directions for his execution. Every order that she gave, and that the men obeyed, seemed to precipitate his fate! He had serious thoughts of forfeiting his passage money, and offering Barbara a handsome remuneration for putting him back on shore. But a latent confidence in Lord Montressor's judgment and a sense of shame for his own nervousness, restrained him from proceeding to that length. But now meeting Miss Brande, he accosted her with:

"Young woman, I would like to have a few moments conversation with you."

"I am at your service, sir."

"Turn about then, if you please."

Barbara complied.

Now, Sir Parke Morelle was as considerable a "landlubber" as could be found in all England or America. He was, in his profound ignorance of nautical affairs, quite competent to be a U. S. Secretary of the Navy. As they walked forward he said:

"Ahem—aha. Young woman ———"

"I beg your pardon, sir, I am called Barbara Brande."

"Ahem—Miss Brande, can you rely upon your own competency for a—for taking care of this vessel."

Barbara Brande's great, strong black eyes flashed down upon him with an expression that made the autocrat of Hyde Hall quail.

"I could rely upon myself to take care of a fleet!" was upon her tongue's end. But Barbara possessed the rare virtue of self-control, and pitying the poor old man who had

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neither the physical courage to go fearlessly to sea with her nor the moral courage to confess his weakness and stay home—she answered:

"Sir Parke, I have two little brothers on board whom I love better than my own life. They are hostages for your safety."

"I do not understand you, Miss Brande."

"Nor did I engage to furnish you with an understanding," thought Barbara, but repressing herself, she replied:—"Loving Willful and Edwy as I love my own soul, I never would have taken them on this voyage had I not known myself in every respect fully competent to take care of the vessel and of them, as well as any captain in the merchant's service could do.

"But you are a woman," said Sir Parke, still hesitating.

Another flash of the great black eyes, and Barbara warming up, replied:

"Well, sir! am I on trial for being a woman, or for being a sea captain, which?"

"For being both in one, rather," answered the baronet.

"Indeed! And why for being both in one? Has not a woman a brain as well as a heart? Has she not courage as well as gentleness? Fortitude as well as patience? Has it not been proved over and over again, a thousand and a thousand times, that in moments of danger woman have exhibited as much presence of mind, courage, promptitude, and skill as the best men among you?"

But we have elsewhere given Barbara Brande's defense of herself in her chosen vocation, and will not repeat it here.

The baronet was silenced if not convinced by her argument, and presently turned the attack from the captain to the craft.

"How could such a little craft live in a stormy sea for instance?"

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Barbara's eyes glowed, and her ripe lips wreathed in the smile that beamed from her face.

"How, sir, does the little sapling survive the storm that twists off the great oak of a hundred years growth? Why, sir, a craft like this will ride lightly on the crest of waves that would break over and engulf a ship of the line! Why, sir, the great waves that would thunder over the decks of a heavy man-of-war would lift this peaceful little merchantman and bear her on in safety—as if indeed there were a sentient magnanimity in old ocean, which, while warring upon the strong would spare the weak."

They now turned in their promenade and walked aft.

"So you think you and the Petrel could weather a storm? Have you any experience of the fact?"

"Have I any experience of the fact?——Willful! what are you about there! Will you run over that lighter? Helm-a-lee! Helm-a lee!—steady, so!—Have I any experience of that fact? I should think so! The little Petrel behaves beautifully in a storm! She rides the waves like a buoy, or lies-to snugly as a little duck! the brave little Petrel! the bonny little Petrel!"

"Then you have been in a storm—you have carried your vessel safely through it?" inquired Sir Parke, as they reached the stern, in which Lord Montressor sat with a pocket telescope in his hand, taking sight at the villas on the shore.

"Lord Montressor," said Barbara, "your friend asks me if I have ever worked this vessel through a storm. Tell him how we weathered the gales in the Gulf Stream!—for I am immensely tired of him," she added, as she dropped the arm of Sir Parke and left him on the hands of her other passenger.

Barbara walked forward to the "caboose."

Let my inland readers now imagine a little box two yards square, on the forecastle—painted on the outside, and fur-

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nished inside with a stove and dresser, and a full complement of pots, pans, kettles, and crockery-ware.

The presiding genius of this place was a stout, jet-black negro woman, whose smiling eyes and ivory teeth imparted a contented and good-humored expression to her homely face.

"What have you got for dinner, Climene?"

"Dere's a ham on a b'ilin, and I jes gwine put down a line o' mutton to roas'."

"That's right; cook the fresh provisions every day, for they'll not keep, and we have no live stock to kill. And the vegetables?"

"Why, dere's taters, an' cabbidge, an' spinidge."

"That will do—and the desert?"

"I gwine make apple pie and custard puddin'—caze you see I tuk notice afore how Lord Monstrouser allers likes somfin deliky."

"Yes, that will do; that will do quite well."

And leaving the namesake of the sea-nymph to her culinary conjurations in the caboose, Barbara went down into the cabin to lay the cloth for dinner.

I have neither time nor space to follow the details of this voyage.

For the first two weeks the voyagers were blessed with the finest weather.

But in the midst of the third week the sky changed.

"And such a change, oh night, and storm, and darkness!"

March came in "like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." The wind arose in the north-west, and blowed almost incessantly for four weeks, that is, it would blow continuously for three days, then lull for a day, or only "pause to gather its fearful breath," and rise with recovered strength, and blow harder than ever. As the vessel entered the Gulf Stream, the weather grew worse—the gale became a hurricane—the rough sea ran mountains high.

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But the brave little Petrel behaved beautifully, as Barbara had said; she tacked like a skillful politician, rode the high waves like a jockey boy, or lay-to like a duck, as occasion required.

Lord Montressor and his man worked as hard as the seamen, whenever their aid was needed. Sir Parke Morelle was too miserably sea-sick to care one sous about the fate of the vessel, unless it was to wish his own sufferings and the Petrel engulfed in the same sea. His valet spent day and night in attendance upon him.

But Barbara Brande was a sight to behold. Her perfect appreciation of the danger, combined with her perfect fearlessness, was a subject of wonder to all. Her unwavering courage, her undisturbed cheerfulness, her unruffled temper, the constant firmness and serenity of her countenance, the prompt, clear and ringing tones of her voice—heard through the howling of the wind and the thundering of the waves, inspired faith, and hope, and courage in every bosom.

Only once was Barbara moved; this was when her little brother Edwy—whom she had sent below, but who, in sympathetic excitement, had stolen again upon deck—was, by the pitching of the vessel, thrown violently forward, and only saved from going overboard, by Lord Montressor, who sprang and caught him in his arms. Barbara, pale as monumental marble, took the boy from his lordship's arms, carried him below, and locked him up in the state-room for safety. Then she reappeared on deck as cool, as firm, and as prompt for action as before.

At length the wearying and wearied wind lulled. At last fine weather, with a fair southerly breeze, succeeded, and on the fifth of April the Petrel entered Chesapeake Bay; and the next day at sunset she dropt anchor off Brande's Headland.

It was with the deepest emotion that Lord Montressor

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gazed upon the spot that had become the chosen retreat of Estelle.

The setting sun shone full against the yellow sandy beach, the gray, rocky bank, and flecked with golden light the tender spring foliage of the oak trees that surrounded and half concealed the old stone house upon the summit.

With the profoundest interest he contemplated the scene.

That mansion was her home. There she lived, suffered and endured, There, from some hidden covert, she had undoubtedly wept and watched for, and gazed upon his form; while he, unconscious of her proximity, had, gun in hand, wandered through the woods and fields and moors around the place.

Where was she now? In or near that old gray house, undoubtedly. Bnt what was she about?—at her lonely tea-table?—in her parlor, reading or meditating?—in the woods, rambling alone?—in the graveyard, ruminating? Where? How would she receive him? Was she, perhaps, that moment thinking of him, if not expecting him?

She would be greatly surprised to see him and her father. But would her surprise be altogether one of joy? That she loved him was undoubtedly true. That she loved him more than her own dearest earthly interests, and only less than her Creator, had been proved. But would she now consent to forget her own horrible calamity, and permit him to make her and himself, in his own rational manner, happy?

That she had a theory of his future brilliant destiny, which she had resolved not to dim by sharing, he had heard. That she could be as firm as she was disinterested, he had ascertained. Could he, then, be able to convince her, that, to him, *her* "love was the greatest good in the world?"

But, patience—patience. Very soon these questions must be answered—these doubts set at rest. In an hour

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he should stand face to face with his beautiful, his beloved, his long lost, but now recovered Estelle. Till then, oh, throbbing pulse, be still!—oh, faithful, long-suffering heart, be hopeful! No one was on deck but Barbara and the crew, whom she was ordering to take in sail and let go the anchor. When she perceived her favorite passenger, she came forward smilingly to greet him.

"Good-evening, sir. It is a glorious spring evening—the air is as soft and balmy as that of June. You see that we are off the old place again."

"Good-afternoon, Miss Brande. Yes, I see. Will you permit me to inquire how long you will remain here, and whether you will go on shore?"

"I shall remain at anchor through the night, and set sail again in the morning. And I will go on shore this evening, for I could almost imagine the poor old place feeling hurt if I passed it," said Barbara, with one of her earnest smiles.

"Will you further permit me to remind you of a promise you gave when you were here last, to show me over your old house—one of the oldest houses in Maryland, as you said?"

Barbara looked embarrassed, hesitated, and then replied—

"Lord Montressor, that promise did not project itself down all time. It was only for the day upon which it was given. And now, I hope you will excuse me."

Lord Montressor bowed. "If you wish to go on shore, sir, the long-boat, is, of course, at your service; but I cannot invite you to the house."

"Then I should feel obliged to you, my dear Miss Brande, to give me a seat when you yourself go on shore."

"I will do that with pleasure, sir."

Sir Parke Morelle now waked up from his after-dinner nap, came on deck, and joined Montressor. Barbara

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bowed and left them alone together while she went forward to give orders for the long-boat to be prepared.

"That is your daughter's home, Sir Parke," said Lord Montressor, pointing to the dreary Headland, now growing darker under the thick falling shadows of evening.

"Good Heaven! what a desolate place!" exclaimed the baronet, in consternation.

"Yes; but I can well imagine that the desolation of the heart within should have rendered her insensible to the desolation of the scene without," replied Montressor, solemnly.

Not perhaps feeling the latent rebuke hidden in these words, the baronet continued to gaze upon the picturesque Headland, until the long-boat was reported ready.

"I am going on shore—will you accompany me now?"

"Of course! of course! I will accompany you now," replied the baronet.

Barbara came up dressed in the gray serge gown, sacque and hood that was her usual out-door costume.

"Sir Parke has also decided to go on shore, Miss Brande," said Lord Montressor.

"Very good, sir," said Barbara, betraying some little distrust and anxiety—"the boat awaits your convenience, gentlemen."

"We are ready to attend you, Miss Brande."

They went to the starboard gangway, where Lord Montressor led the way down the ladder, and having reached the boat, he put up his hand to assist Barbara in the descent; a courtesy which the girl accepted solely on the principle of politeness, for in truth, so far from requiring such assistance, she was rather embarrassed by its offer, as well as impeded by its forced acceptance. By the same ready hand, Sir Parke was next helped down the ladder And when they were all seated, the oarsmen plied their oars, and the long-boat glided swiftly over the starlit

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waters toward the Headland that loomed darkly above them. In a few moments, the boat touched the sand, and was pushed up under the heavy shadows of the overhanging, wooded bank.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DREARY HEADLAND.

"Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, oh sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead,
Will never come back to me.

"And the stately ship goes on
To the haven under the hill,
But oh! for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still."—*Tennyson.*

"WHAT a place to land in! It is like entering Hades," said Sir Parke, as they got out of the boat and stood upon the beach.

"Take the boat back to bring off the boys," ordered Miss Brande.

And when she was left alone with her passengers, she said—

"Now, gentlemen, how can I serve you? How will you amuse yourselves? The sporting season is long over. And I regret to say that I am not at liberty to invite you up to the house."

"Then, Miss Brande, we must waive ceremony and proceed without invitation," said Lord Montressor, gently, as if to atone in his manner for any seeming rudeness in his words.

"What can you mean, sir?" inquired Barbara, with increased distrust and anxiety.

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"Pardon me, Miss Brande. You cannot but have guessed the object of Sir Parke Morelle's voyage to America?"

"I am no Yankee, sir; yet, of course, as you say, I have surmised that the father comes but in quest of his daughter," replied Barbara, with a glance full of sympathy toward the baronet.

Sir Parke responded by slightly lifting his hat.

"And would you, Miss Brande, knowing the present home of that long-lost daughter, suffer her father, in his ignorance of her retreat, to leave the spot far behind, to pursue his unavailing search in another hopeless direction?" inquired Lord Montressor, solemnly.

Barbara did not at once reply, but seemed buried in profound reflection, as if seeking the clue to some unexplained mystery.

Lord Montressor could scarcely repress his vehement impatience.

"Well, Miss Brande?" he said, anxiously regarding her.

"Well, sir," replied Barbara, gravely, "I perceive that you have somehow discovered the retreat of this lady. I only trust that it has been through no indiscretion on my part."

"We have. She is your recluse tenant. And we have learned this fact through no inadvertency of yours."

"Since this is so," said Barbara, earnestly, "I will admit, that I am glad of it. Knowing, or rather believing as I did, that yourself and her father were on the way to seek her where she could not be found, in the city of Baltimore, my heart, through all the voyage, ached because I was not permitted to say to you—'She whom you seek is my tenant at the Headland.' Thank Heaven, that without any breach of faith on my part, you are informed of it. Sir Parke"—she said, turning and addressing the baronet—"you will let your daughter know this"

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"I will, Miss Brande. How shall we get up this steep? It is a very dark night."

"I will show you. Follow me, if you please. Lord Montressor! I really think you had better give your arm to Sir Parke. The ascent is very difficult even in daylight, and now we can scarcely discern the cedar thickets from the chasms in the rocks," said Barbara, as she carefully led the way up the bank.

Lord Montressor took the hand of the old man, and with a wildly throbbing heart, that all his resolution could not quiet, followed. A few moments more—a few swift, vital moments more and he should see her—should hear her speak—should clasp her living hand! Oh! wild impatient heart be still—be still—it is but an instant, and then! and then!

They toiled up the bank; they reached the top, and then the old trees waving in the night wind, and the old house looming in the darkness, stood before them. A gloomy, foreboding, funereal atmosphere overshadowed the place. Hope sickened as she looked upon the scene.

"It is as dark as Erebus! There is not a light to be seen in all the house, and not a sound to be heard without. I hope the mistress and her maid have not yet retired," said Lord Montressor, uneasily.

"Oh, no, sir! I think not. The lady's chamber, which is also her usual sitting-room, and the maid's kitchen, are both in the back part of the building. I will ring."

And going up the rickety steps of the portico, Barbara rang a peal, and waited a minute—two minutes—but no advancing light was seen; no coming step was heard. She rang louder.

Ting-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling!

The peal was re-echoed through the great, desolate house, with a strange, vacant, hollow reverberation!

Then followed a dead silence; they waited anxiously

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and tried in the darkness to read the expression in each other's faces. Three minutes passed like an age, and Barbara pulled the bell-handle with all her strength.

Ting! a-ling! a-ling! a-ling! A-LANG! A-LANG! LANG!

It sounded through the vast gloomy house with a clamor and a clangor loud enough to rouse the old dead ancestors in the burial-ground beyond; it awoke nothing but the dreary, wailing, ghostly echo!

Five minutes of anxious waiting, peering and listening, passed, and then Barbara jerked the bell-handle a third time, with peril to the ropes.

CLANG! A-RANG! A-RANG! RANG! RANG! RANG! RANG!

It seemed enough to have shaken the old chimneys to their base, and started the slates from the roof!

But only the phantom Echo was within to wail forth her weird response!

They looked at each other, with dimly visible, troubled white faces, gleaming faintly in the surrounding darkness For some moments, no one spoke; each seemed fearful to give voice to his or her forebodings.

Had Death been there before them, and forever set the seal of the grave upon Estelle's earthly fate, and rendered vain, as far as life was concerned, her father's late relenting?

Lord Montressor's deep troubled voice first broke the silence.

"Miss Brande, what think you of this?"

"I dare not yet think," replied Barbara, in a tremulous tone; "but we will go around to the back part of the house, and see if we can discover any thing."

And carefully descending the rickety stairs, she groped her way around to the rear of the dwelling. The two gentlemen followed her. But at the back as at the front, all was shut up, dark and still. No sign of human habitation was near the place

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"Miss Brande," exclaimed Lord Montressor, in voice of anguish, "what is the meaning of this?"

"The Lord only knows!" responded Barbara, in great agitation. "But, follow me, gentlemen."

"Where are you going?" inquired Sir Parke Morelle.

"Down to a cabin at the foot of the bank, where two old negroes live who may be able to give us some satisfaction."

And hurrying onward, she began the difficult descent of the steep, with a precipitancy more indicative of haste and anxiety than of a regard for her own life and limbs.

The gentlemen followed with all speed consistent with Sir Parke's infirmities.

At the foot of the bank she ran against the boys, just landed from the boat.

"Why, where in the world are you running to, sister?" exclaimed Willful, when stopped by the wild and hurrying figure.

"To Uncle Nep's cabin! The house above is abandoned! Follow me. But where is the boat?"

"It is just putting off," replied Willful.

"Boat ahoy!" she called—"come back and wait for us at the foot of the ash tree."

Lord Montressor, who had by this time helped Sir Parke down the descent, now joined her. She also heard the light splash of the oars of the returning boat, and knew by the sound which followed that it was pushed up on the sands.

"Come, now," she said, and hurried along under the overhanging bank until she came to a place where the bluff suddenly sunk into a little bowl-like hollow, where, closely sheltered and deeply shaded even at noon-day by the overarching trees, stood the little cabin, with its single dip candle gleaming through the tiny window out into the deep darkness.

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Willful ran forward and rapped at the door, which was immediately opened by the namesake of the Ocean Queen, who called out—

"Who dar?"

"It's me, Aunt Amphitrite," replied the grammar-despising lad.

"Lors a messy pon top o' my soul, if it aint de chile! Hi, boy, where you come from? Drop right outen the sky, didn't yer? Come in, chile! Come in! Lors a messy, come in outen de night air! Where's your sister?"

"Here I am, Aunty, and here are strangers," said Barbara, as she came up.

"Lors, Miss Barbra, chile, I'se so 'joyed to see yer, 'deed I is; but what made you go for to fetch strangers here and ketch me in my ole, ebery-day duds? Ef you'd a only guve me time I'd a put on my black silk gown as dat dear, bressed, free-hearted chile, Miss Estel, guve me for a Sunday gown! An' dere's my ole man in dere a fuming de whole place wid his 'bacco, like a saint in de odor o' sanctity, which I knows as white folks don't like! Heave it away, you mis-beguided ole sinner you, an' let de white folks in!" cried Amphitrite, breaking off from her discourse to take the pipe from her dark liege lord's lips.

"Never mind his smoking, Amphy! We do not want to come in! Ask your husband to come here to the door; we wish to speak to you both," said Barbara, who with her heart pausing with dread, now that she had arrived at the spot, seized the slightest pretext for delaying the question upon which the happiness of so many hung.

The old man came bending toward the door.

"How does you do, Miss Barbra, honey? 'Deed I'se nighty proud to see you! How do, Mars't Edwy, honey? How de chile do grow!"

"I am very glad to see you so well, Neptune, but have no time nor heart for compliments now, old man," said Miss

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Brande, when she saw that Sir Parke Morelle and Lord Montressor had come up and were now standing near her, in great anxiety. "Tell me, Neptune! What has become of Mrs. Estel?"

"The hearts of all suspended their action while waiting the slow reply of the old man. It came at last in the form of another question.

"Mrs. Estel, honey?"

"Yes!"

"De beaut'ful chile as lib up yonder?"

"Yes. Yes!"

"De one as you rent de ole house to?"

"Yes! Yes! Yes! Oh! speak at once, and tell us where she is!"

"Done gone."

"Gone! we know it! but WHERE?"

"Dat's what I can't tell you, honey. She done gone 'way in a wessel!—she an' de young 'oman."

Thank Heaven that their worst fears were set at rest. She was not "gone" out of the world! she was still living! they had still a future! all breathed more freely.

"But surely you know something about the lady's departure? Come! collect your faculties, Neptune, and tell us what you do know!" said Barbara.

"'Deed I doesn't know a singly thing more'n I'se telled yer; an' dat's de Hebenly Marster's trufe!"

"Don't you know *when* the lady went?"

"'Deed, honey, she went t'other week; but de zact one I could not 'form you; dough 'haps my ole 'oman might."

"What an idiotic creature!" exclaimed Sir Parke Morelle, in disgust.

Lord Montressor remained silently and intently listening

"Amphitrite, can you tell me when Mrs. Estel went?"

"'Bout a mont' ago, chile!—'deed she!"

"Where did she go?"

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"'Deed, chile, Miss Susan—she 'cline for to tell me, when I ax her!"

"You don't know where she went, then?"

"'Deed, Lord knows don't I, honey! I wish to de Lord how I did!"

"What was the name of the vessel she sailed by?"

"'Clare to Marster, honey, I couldn't tell you, being as how I don't know myself."

"Nor the name of the captain?"

"Nor likewise de name o' de cappen, chile."

"Umph! Was the vessel she sailed in going up or down the Bay?"

"'Deed Lors-a-mity knows, I couldn't 'form you which, Miss Barbra—case de wessel come to anchor some time in de night, and den next night, some time 'fore day, she sailed ag'in. So we nebber seen whedder she came up or down when she 'riv', or whedder she go up or down when she lef'."

"But surely you can tell us which way her prow pointed?" asked Barbara, catching at this faint clue as the drowning catch at straws.

"I donno what you mean by the *prow*, honey."

"Her head, then. In which direction was her head? Where did her head point? Up or down?"

"Why, chile, when *I* seen her, her head pointed straight up in de *sky*, wid a blue an' white flag aflyin' from the top of it! least ways it wer a blue groun' wid a 'mendous big white cross on it, as Miss Susan said, wer a Union Jack—which *Jack* being short for Jonathan, and *Union* meanin' de United States—made me think how she must a' been a 'Merican ship. But any ways, long as yer so anxious to know, her head pointed straight up to de sky!"

"Oh dear me, Amphy! we are not talking of the *mast* head, but of the prow—the forepart of the vessel!" said Barbara, impatiently.

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"'Den 'clare to my 'Vine Master I doesn't know de head from de tail!" retorted the Ocean Queen.

"Neptune! can you inform me whether, when you saw that vessel at anchor in the day time, her prow pointed up or down the bay?"

"'Deed, honey, she stood neyther up *nor* down the Bay; but right *crossways*, wid her prow pintin' right in toward the Headland here!"

"Satisfactory! And you do not know, Neptune, whether she went up or down the Bay?"

"'Deed, honey, I don't know nuffin 't all,'bout 'cept what I'se already telled you."

"Did the lady leave a letter or a message with either of you?"

"'Clare to Marster, honey, de chile didn't leave no letter 'long of us, nor likewise no message cept 'twas to give her love an' de Lor' might bless you."

It were tedious to repeat the close and severe cross-questioning to which the old people were subjected. Suffice it to say that the catechism proved fruitless. The old couple had already informed their mistress of all they had learned upon the subject of the mysterious flitting.

At length Barbara said, "It is barely possible, my lord, that she has left a note or letter for me upon her dressing-table, or somewhere in the house. Shall we get lights, proceed thither, and examine the premises?"

Lord Montressor bowed in silence. His heart was too heavily oppressed with despair for many words.

Barbara told the old man to light a lantern and attend them back to the old house. And once more the whole party, preceded by the old man with the light, traversed the winding beach, ascended the weary bluff, and stood before the half-ruined mansion.

Neptune, who had the keys as well as the lantern, unlocked the front door and admitted them.

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The damp, dreary wind that must have blown out the light had it not been protected by the glass lantern, was the only thing that welcomed them.

They went into the barely furnished parlor, where Barbara found every thing standing as it had stood for years; but no note or letter on table, stand, or mantle-shelf. They next passed into her bed-chamber, where they found every thing in order, but no note or letter. They visited the kitchen and Susan Copsewood's sleeping-room with no more successful results. And at last, after a thorough but fruitless examination of the whole premises, they were forced to abandon the hopeless search.

"All clue seems lost," exclaimed the baronet, in despair.

Lord Montressor could not suppress a deep groan. His strong heart seemed about to break beneath this new blow.

"Let us hope," said Barbara. "We set sail from London for the port of Baltimore, where you, first of all, expected to find her. Let us proceed on our voyage. We may yet come up with her in Baltimore."

"Heaven grant it!" exclaimed the baronet, whose anxiety to find his lost daughter increased with the difficulty and delay.

Barbara then gave the old man, Neptune, the money and packets of groceries that she had brought for him; completed the other little arrangements that had brought her to the shore; took her leave of her old servants, and, accompanied by her disappointed and saddened passengers, returned to the vessel.

Assembled around the little centre-table of the cabin, they held another consultation.

"Had Estelle no friends or neighbors in this place, with whom she might have left a letter or message?" inquired Lord Montressor.

"No, there are none nearer than Eastville. And yet now that I think of it, she may have left some charge with

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my attorney at that village. So if you think best, we will lie at anchor over to-morrow, to ride up thither to make inquiries. What say you, gentlemen?"

"Undoubtedly, that is the plan," replied Lord Montressor and Sir Parke.

The party then separated for the night.

Early the next morning they went on shore. Old Neptune, being ordered, quickly put the horses to the carry-all. Sir Parke and Miss Brande entered and took the back seat. Lord Montressor and Willful sat in front. The boy took the reins. After a rapid drive of two hours, they reached Eastville, and drew up before the lawyer's office.

Miss Brande alighted and entered, where she found the lawyer seated at his desk, writing. He instantly arose and came forward to meet her.

"Good-morning, Miss Brande. Pray take a seat."

"I thank you, no sir. My tenant, Mrs. Estel, has left the Headland. Has she possibly charged you with any letter or message for me?"

"Letter? Yes, Miss Brande; here it is," answered the lawyer, going to his desk and producing the missive.

Barbara almost snatched it from his hand, tore it open, and glanced eagerly along its lines. Then, with a deep sigh, she went out and read it to Sir Parke and Lord Montressor. It ran thus:—

The Headland, March 18.

MY DEAR MISS BRANDE:—In withdrawing from the Headland, for an indefinite number of years, I do not throw up the lease; but leaving the key in charge of Neptune, I beg that during my absence you will freely use the house. Enclosed, you will find payment for the whole term of the lease. Truly your friend,

ESTELLE.

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"And that is all!" simultaneously exclaimed the father and the lover

"Yes."

They were not contented. They left the carriage and went into the office of the lawyer whom they minutely questioned. But he could tell them absolutely nothing.

They re-entered the carriage, and, at Barbara's suggestion, drove to the dwelling of the parish clergyman.

This venerable man had attended Estelle in her illness; but he could give them no satisfaction as to her present retreat. All further inquiries in that neighborhood proved fruitless. Evidently Estelle had concealed from all, the place of her destination.

With heavy hearts they returned to their vessel.

The next morning they set sail for Baltimore, where they duly arrived.

For weeks Sir Parke and Lord Montressor pursued their search through the city. Then finding all their efforts unavailing, they took leave of Barbara Brande and of Baltimore, and began a tour of all the principal cities in the United States. Meanwhile they appointed an agent in New York to whom all communications for themselves were to be addressed. Then they inserted in all the newspapers, carefully-worded advertisements, designed to be understood by Estelle alone, and to be answered through this agent.

After several months of fruitless travel, search, and anxious waiting, it occurred to Sir Parke that his daughter might possibly have returned to her native country. And acting upon this idea, and still accompanied by his intended son-in-law, the baronet sailed for England.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FLIGHT FROM THE HEADLAND.

'Overlive it?—lower yet—be happy?
—wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action,
Lest I wither by despair!"—*Tennyson.*

ESTELLE had been too strong to die.

With the skillful attention of the village physician, the devoted care of her faithful servant, and the fervent prayers of the parish minister, she had recovered from her long and dangerous illness.

The first use she made of her convalescence was to abandon the Headland House.

Since the first exciting visit of Lord Montressor to the place, the scene had become insufferable to her. To fly from it, or to lose her reason seemed the only alternative.

Ah! it is a comparatively easy thing, in some exalted mood of mind, to make a supreme offering of affection to the shrine of duty—as easy as self-slaughter is, if that were required! for the wrench of parting, like the throws of death, is but a short agony! But such voluntary immolation is not self-slaughter, it is more, it is the self-inhumation of the living! The heart thus cut off from the love which is its life, does not find the peace of death but the dull anguish of the living tomb—it cannot die, but continues to throb, to yearn and to suffer. Thus the TEST is not in the fierce struggle with temptation and the keen pangs of sacrifice, but in the terrible reaction; in the dull gnawing pain of all the after time; in the aching sense of bereavement, loneliness and utter desolation; in the long succession of

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dreary, weary days that dawn without hope, and decline without comfort—each an added link to the heavy chain of hapless years, that drag the spirit to the dust; years of slow heart-wasting; years of death in life!

Estelle had thought, when she had severed herself from her lover, that the struggle and the agony was over and the victory won. And after the torture of the criminal trial, and the pitiless battery of myriad eyes that had fallen upon her defenseless head, and after the moral warfare between her deep affections and her high sense of duty,—after all the tempestuous, thronged, and trying scenes through which she had been dragged,—worn out in frame and exhausted in spirit, *rest* had seemed welcome and *solitude* inviting. She had sighed for "a lodge in some vast wilderness, some boundless contiguity of shade."

She had sought and found in the Headland such a retreat. The very desolation and dreariness of the locality had attracted her. The solitary gloom of the dark pine woods, the sterile brow of the bank, and the lonely waste of waters accorded well with her soul's sadness. The melancholy days of Autumn—"the saddest in the year;" the incessant weeping of the skies; the unceasing wailing of the wind; the perpetual sighing of the trees for their ever falling leaves; the monotonous moaning of the sea;—all harmonized with the dirge-like, mournful music of her own spirit.

But this mood was in itself, morbid and temporary. It would not have lasted, even had Lord Montressor never arrived at the Headland to break it up.

Unsuspecting her presence at the house, he had appeared. Unseen by him, she had watched him from her window. Stifling the mighty hunger of her heart, she had suffered him to depart.

And then had come the crisis of the fever.

After her recovery—to remain upon that spot associated

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with the memory of his short and sad visit; in that house so void, so lonely, so cheerless; without a companion, without an occupation; without an interest in life; to rise each morning without object; to lie down each night without sleep; to put away day after day, week after week, month after month, the longing desire to hear from him, to write to him, to go after him; to continue such a life and not go mad, was difficult—was impossible.

To save herself from this last worst evil, she resolved to shut up the house and leave the Headland; to go—somewhere, anywhere, she knew not, cared not,—whither!

If her journey should only afford her change of scene, and distraction from one clinging grief—that would be enough.

At this extremity of need, when she was scarcely competent to the conducting of her own course, providence sent her unhoped for aid and advice.

This came in the form of old Mr. Goodloe, the parish clergyman, who had visited, pitied, and prayed for her during her severe illness.

The Reverend Barnabas Goodloe, was not a man of any great depth of feeling, breadth of intellect, or extent of experience. But he had passed the greater portion of a long life, in performing the quiet duties of a country clergyman. For forty years he had preached simple sermons to a rustic congregation; had married young men and maidens; christened children; buried the dead; counseled the living; comforted the afflicted; visited the sick; and relieved the poor of the parish of Eastville. But in all his life, so interesting an object as Estelle had never crossed his path In his capacity of clergyman, he had been called to her bedside to pray for her recovery, by Susan Copsewood, who had a great and saving faith in "the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man," and who ascribed her beloved lady's

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restoration to health, not so much to the skill of the physician, as to the petitions of the pastor.

But Mr. Goodloe could not forget the sweet pale face, and deep, soft tones, and gentle manners of the beautiful sufferer, in whom at the very first sight, he had felt so keen an interest. And though she did not belong to his congregation, and had not once appeared in his church, nor yet had, in thanking him for his attention, invited him to call again; despite his dread of being considered intrusive, he felt irresistibly impelled to pay her a visit.

Estelle received him with the gentle courtesy for which she was distinguished, again thanked him for his kind attentions during her illness; and afterward on receiving his adieu requested him to come again. Probably her first omission of this civility had been unintentional. At least so reasoned the aged minister, who soon repeated his visit to Estelle, between whom and himself a mutual esteem arose.

On one of these visits, after contemplating her despairing but most lovely face, and noticing that it grew visibly thinner, paler, and more shadowy, he took her slender hand and said:—

"My child, I would not for the world seek to intrude upon your confidence; but your countenance too plainly betrays that you are the victim of some deep, consuming, almost incurable grief. Whatever that grief may be—and I do not seek to know—this dreary scene and lonely life is not the way to wrestle with it successfully; for it is overcoming you—you are dying under it."

"Were that all, indeed, that were well!" replied the lady mournfully.

"Not so, my child; for life has duties. You have no right to drop the burden of existence; we must all first earn the Heavenly rest. You are not a native of this place, lady; for you there is no healing in these solitary scenes; you must arise and go hence; you have means; go into

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the crowded city; seek out the unfortunate with which the lanes and alleys are thronged—find the lost men, the wretched women, and destitute children; forget your own, in ministering to their greater sorrows."

"'Greater sorrows,' good Heavens!" echoed Estelle, in mournful incredulity.

"Yes! *greater* sorrows! however great yours may be—I repeat that there are many, very many who all their mortal lives labor under greater sorrows. You—whatever your grief may be—have youth, health, beauty, intellect, education, competence, a conscience void of offense, and, above all, you are not 'without God in the world.' Your single sorrow is a disappointment, or a bereavement. That is all you probably have to suffer. But for many others,—to disappointment, and to bereavement, is added age, illness, famine, cold, squalor, the evils of ignorance, the remorse of guilt,—and under all the horrors of a practical atheism! Behold! I have given you a glimpse of an existing Gehenna, of which you had never heard or dreamed; but to which you will go as a ministering, and redeeming angel."

Estelle was deeply moved; pale and breathless she arose and placing her hand in that of the pastor, murmured faintly:

"That is my work. I thank you for indicating it. I will go."

He laid his hand on her head—

"Go! an unprofessed sister of charity, among the poor, the ignorant, the sick, and the prisoners. Go! hand-maiden of the Man of Sorrows, follow Him in works of mercy, and He will give you His 'peace—not as the world giveth will He give it you.' And so God bless you!"

And the good old man departed.

And she did not sink again into the bathos of a self-indulgent sorrow. She went to work and prepared for her mission. She set her house in order; visited the quarters of her humble friends, the old negro couple, and added

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many substantial comforts to their cabin. She wrote a letter of adieu to her landlady, Barbara Brande, and committed it to the care of her attorney to be delivered. Then she closed her house, left the keys, for the convenience of the proprietor, with old Neptune, took leave of her few lowly acquaintances, and, accompanied by her devoted attendant, departed without leaving behind any clue to her destination.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE PASSAGE OF YEARS.

> On! on! our moments hurry by
> Like shadows of a passing cloud."—*Bowring.*

FIVE years have elapsed since the events recorded in our last chapter, and six since the fatal incident with which this story opened.

Sir Parke and Lady Morelle, after having used every means in their power for the recovery of their daughter, gave up the search in despair, and retired to Hyde Hall, where, year after year, they lived in a sort of hopeless watching for some one circumstance to arise that might guide them to a knowledge of her home.

Lord Montressor, after long and fruitless efforts to discover the retreat of his lost love, unable to endure life amid scenes so associated with vain hopes and memories of Estelle, had accepted service under the Crown and represented his sovereign at one of the highest continental courts.

Still young, eminently handsome, accomplished and graceful, endowed with great wealth, high rank and the distinguished favor of his his sovereign, he moved, " the cynosure

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of neighboring eyes," among the youthful, beautiful, and gifted of his own and other countries. But no second love displaced his lost Estelle, no transient fancy for a single instant disputed her home in his heart. Her memory was dearer to his soul, than the most beautiful woman's presence; the faint hope of some day finding her, was sweeter than the highest aspirations of his worldly ambition. Her idea filled his whole heart, from which it was never for an instant absent. He loved her above all created beings, with a pure, passionate, undying love—with a longing, hoping, praying love. He understood and honored the motives of her self-sacrifice. And be sure, that if ever he shall find her, he will hasten to lay at her feet an unchanged heart.

A year previous to the time at which we resume the thread of our story, Lord Montressor, by the death of a distant relative, had succeeded to the title and estates of the Earldom of Eagletower. And six months after this new accession of dignity his lordship had been ordered by the government upon a secret and most important diplomatic mission to the city of Washington. To vail the political aspect of his voyage, as well as to form a pleasant party, Lord Eagletower (as we must now call him), had invited Sir Parke and Lady Morelle and Lord Dazzleright to accompany him to the United States. The baronet and his lady, weary of Hyde Hall, needing a change, and vaguely hoping to hear of their daughter in the country in which she had been last seen, accepted the invitation. Lord Dazzleright, who had never visited America, was glad to avail himself of the present opportunity of doing so in the company of his friends. Thus it was in May, 184–, five years from the time when they had lost sight of Estelle, that the whole party sailed for the United States, where they arrived safely in June.

But where meanwhile, was Estelle? The scenes that had known her, now "knew her no more." Save in the

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hearts of the few who loved her, her memory seemed to have perished from the face of the earth. Yet, in the far distant, great metropolis of the western world, the poor, the sick, the imprisoned, the all-suffering, daily invoked blessings on the head of a dark-robed, lovely lady, whose beautiful pale face was seldom unvailed, save by the side of the invalid, the destitute, or the sorrowful, and whom those who gratefully remembered her in their prayers, called by the name of "Estel." How or where this angel visitant lived, not one among her proteges knew. But, day after day, and week after week, this child of wealth, luxury and refinement might have been seen in the squalid haunts of poverty, disease and ignorance, sitting beside the fetid bed, breathing the sickening air, waiting upon the often repulsive objects of illness. And this not for one month, or two, but month after month, and year after year, for the whole lustrum during which her friends had lost sight of her. And not in vain, for, with her, into miserable dwellings came light, knowledge, and purity; and before her fled ignorance, prejudice, and disease. The close room would be thrown open to the reviving air of heaven; the heated clothing renewed; the parched lips and burning skin of fever refreshed with coldest water; and, above all, the fainting and despairing spirit raised and guided to the feet of the all-merciful Physician of souls, who never yet sent a suppliant away unhealed. And oh, how often her slender hand has been clasped in tearful gratitude, and prayers and blessings have greeted her coming, and followed her departure? And those who prayed for the lovely minister of mercy, besought the compassionate Father of love to look down in pity upon her who pitied all other sufferers, and to lift from her palest brow that heavy cloud of strange sorrow that overshadowed it.

Such, for five years, had been the life, labors, and consolations of Estelle.

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And our favorite, Barbara Brande, the handsome Amazon, the brave girl-captain, what of her and her boy-brothers, who must have almost reached the bourne of manhood?

Barbara was now twenty-seven years of age. Under favorable circumstances, woman should continue to grow handsomer until her thirtieth year. Whether the beautiful Amazon was under such auspices or not, it is certain that at twenty-seven she was a much finer-looking woman than she had been at twenty-two. She had continued her sea-life, and had prospered therein. The little brigantine, the Petrel, had been exchanged for the "Ocean Queen." Her crew was quadrupled, and each hand had been selected with the greatest care and caution. Her brothers had nearly reached man's estate, and were now able to sustain her authority in cases of exigency. Her trade had greatly increased.

In a word, Barbara Brande had but one living regret.

This was caused by the conduct of her eldest and favorite brother, Willful. Now, do not hasten to conclude that young Willful Brande contracted evil habits, for such a judgment would be the very antipodes of justice.

A nobler-hearted, or more upright youth than Willful Brande never lived. He comprehended and appreciated his brave and beautiful sister, and thence he loved and honored her above all creatures on earth; and also, thence he was her greatest comfort and her best beloved; her "right-hand man," her "gallant mate," her "beau," were some of the playful pet names she had bestowed on him. Her "rudder," her "sheet-anchor," her "storm-staysail," were other earnest synonymes for her brother, Willful Brande.

He resembled his sister. In the tall, lithe, strong and graceful figure, in the well-turned neck and stately head, in the clean cut, noble features; in the jet black curling hair, and the full commanding eyes, he seemed the very counter-

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part of Barbara. Had they exchanged dresses, the one might have been taken for the other. And as this grand style of beauty was rather masculine than feminine, it proved even more attractive in Willful than in Barbara. Willful Brande had continued to be his sister's greatest pride and joy, until he approached his sixteenth year. Then the youth conceived the ambitious idea of entering the United States Navy, and gave his sister no peace until she had, through an influential friend of her family—General ———, one of the senators from her State, procured for him a midshipman's warrant. And Willful Brande now rejoiced in a naval uniform, and looked forward to the time when he should wear the epaulets.

And Barbara, with Edwy for mate, still commanded the Ocean Queen.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE HEIRESS OF THE ISLE.

"Thus from within and from without,
She grew a flower of mind and eye
'Twas love that circled her about,
And love that made her quick reply."—*Sterling.*

CHANGES had also in this time passed over the charming sea-girt island and its inhabitants.

Etoile from a beautiful child, had grown into a most beautiful maiden. Her form was of medium size and of exquisite symmetry. Her golden ringlets were more sunny bright, her smooth forehead more snowy-white, her blooming cheeks and lips flushed with a richer carnation, her blue eyes softened with a deeper tenderness. All her motions were perfect grace, all her tones perfect melody

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Her mind was one of the finest order, and was well cultivated, because she had followed up her earlier course of instruction by diligently reading the numerous volumes carefully selected for her use, by Julius Luxmore. She was passionately fond of music and of painting, to the study of which she had first been introduced by the accomplished Madame L'Orient, and which, of late years, she had, with the aid of manuals, enthusiastically cultivated. For the rest the beautiful girl was blessed with the sweetest temper and the gayest spirit. And thus, taken all for all in all, she was the moral sunshine of the Island.

Julius Luxmore continued the honored friend and confidential agent of Monsieur Henri De L'Ile. He sought by every means to ingratiate himself into the confidence, esteem, and affection of the master, the heiress, and even the negroes of the Island. He was handsome in person, plausible in sentiment, and pleasing in address. He seemed a miracle of ability, honor and benevolence. The master distinguished him, the servants lauded him, and Etoile having few to love in the world, loved him; but it was with a younger sister's innocent, confiding affection.

And even if in some unguarded hour, when his mask of fair seeming was not fitted closely, Etoile with her fine feminine instinct faintly perceived that he was not in all respects perfect excellence, she quickly suppressed this idea, accusing herself of injustice and all uncharitableness. She absolutely *saw* nothing wrong in Julius Luxmore; there appeared to be no *reason* for her occasional suspicions of his soundness of integrity, and therefore she repelled those suspicions as both unjust and ungenerous.

For with all her mental and moral wealth—with her strength of intellect and warmth of affection, this beautiful young recluse of the isle, cut off from communication with all the rest of the world, was the most unsophisticated child of nature, entirely innocent of the knowledge of con-

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ventional life. If she always moved, spoke, and acted with the most exquisite politeness, it was because her soul was as gracious as her person was graceful. And if sometimes she made quaint mistakes, they were always the natural mistakes of a pure heart that thinketh no evil.

Mr. Luxmore had done all that man could do to recommend himself to her good opinion. He taxed his invention to increase her resources of interest and amusement.

In his frequent visits to the cities of the main land he collected the rarest and most attractive books, pictures, statuettes, vases, and ornamental, useful or instructive objects of every description.

At the Island, he had a green-house built and filled with the rarest exotics, that she might enjoy flowers all the year round. Adjoining the green-house, he caused an aviary to be erected, which he peopled with the finest song birds of our own and other countries. These conservatories were connected by glass doors with the favorite parlor and bed-chamber of Etoile, which now occupied the right hand side of the hall on the first floor. And thus the young heiress could at all seasons of the year enjoy the perfume of flowers, and the songs of birds.

The Island was, as I have already said, a mile in diameter, and three miles in circumference. Mr. Luxmore caused a road to be cleared around the whole circuit of the Isle above the beach, that Etoile might have a long three-mile race-course. And on his next visit to New York, he purchased from a celebrated riding-school a lady's trained palfrey—a beautiful silvery white Arabian, which, together with a rich saddle and bridle, he shipped and conveyed to the Island for the use of Etoile.

Of all the presents that he had brought, this the most delighted the young girl. And she cordially expressed her thanks. It was Mr. Luxmore who first lifted her into

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the saddle, and taught her to guide her horse—it was Mr. Luxmore who was her constant companion in riding.

I will sketch one day, that the reader may judge how the beautiful young Islander, without companions of her own age, passed her time.

At the rising of the sun, the jubliant matin songs of the myriads of birds that swarmed the Isle awakened her. She arose, and knelt, and offered up her morning worship, then came out of her chamber, and when she was joined by Madeline, who with a bathing dress hung over arm, attended her young lady down to the crystal creek, where for half an hour she bathed and swan about like a Nereid in the limpid stream. Then resuming her ordinary dress, she returned to the house where Julius Luxmore would be waiting with two horses to take her on her morning ride. After a gallop of three-quarters of an hour around the beach, she would return with a fine appetite for breakfast. After the morning meal was over, she would retire to her own parlor, the front room on the right hand of the passage on the first floor, where she would occupy the long forenoon in reading, drawing, and practicing music on the piano or guitar, until one o'clock—when she would go out for an hour's walk in the shady groves before returning to dinner at two. After the mid-day meal she would take her needlework and go into her uncle's cool sitting-room, where she would sit and sew, while the Monsieur Henri reclined in his arm-chair, and Julius Luxmore read to them both from Milton, Shakspeare, Paley, or some other of the English poets or essayists, until the old man fell asleep. They would then leave him to enjoy his nap, and go down to the beach, enter the smack, hoist a sail, and take a run of five or six miles up and down the Bay; after which they would return to an early tea. When the evening repast was over, Etoile would take her guitar and join her uncle

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and Julius Luxmore on the vine-shaded piazza, where they would sit, and she would sing and play for them, until the hour of retirement. At ten everybody on the Island was in bed.

Thus I have given you as a sample one day of Etoile's life. A sufficiently happy programme for a single day; but when day after day, week after week, and month after month, with little variety, passed in this manner, it is not surprising that it should become monotonous and wearisome, and that, notwithstanding all the means and appliances of happiness with which she was surrounded, the beautiful Etoile should sigh for the unknown world beyond, which her imagination painted in such brilliant hues. And when Mr. Luxmore, after one of his visits to the main land, would return, bringing some rare exotic, some beautiful bird, some exquisite picture or sweet-toned lute, she would receive them with a smile of joy and gratitude that would be quickly followed by a deep sigh of aspiration for that world beyond, whence all these beautiful things came! For if every thing that came from that distant shore was so charming, how much more charming must the shore itself be, she reasoned. And thus time and circumstances increased her longing to see the mainland.

But it was during the severe winter months when the ice-bound shores of the island sequestrated its inhabitants from all the rest of the human race, and allowed neither going forth nor coming in, that the society of Julius Luxmore was considered the very greatest acquisition to the enjoyment of the family. During the short days, when they could not venture from the house, Mr. Luxmore would play chess or backgammon with the old man all the morning; read to him and to Etoile all the afternoon, and recount for their amusement his adventures by sea and land, all the evening. Thus he rendered himself almost indispensable to the house.

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It was in the fifth year of Julius Luxmore's residence upon the Island, that an important event occurred, which shall be related in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXXV.

EUTHANASY.

"Methinks it were no pain to die
On such an eve, when such a sky
O'er-canopies the west.
To gaze my fill on you calm deep,
Then like an infant sink to sleep
On earth my mother's breath."—*Old Poem.*

THE circumstance alluded to at the close of the last chapter, was the death of Monsieur Henri De L'Ile.

It was early in the autumn of the fifth year of Julius Luxmore's residence on the Island, that the old man departed to the better land. His decease, as is frequently the case with the extremely aged, was sudden and painless. His death was as beautiful as his life had been beneficent. And this was the manner of his falling asleep. Upon the afternoon of the first of October, he had, in company with his niece and his friend, partaken of a slight supper of coffee, cakes, and fruit. He lingered awhile in the piazza, listening to Etoile's guitar. At the close of her song, he smiled, laid his hand upon her bright curls, prayed God bless her, and then calling his pet spaniel, he walked out to his favorite arbor seat of late Bourbon roses, to sit and watch the golden autumnal sun go down behind the distant shore of Northtumberland. He remained out so

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much longer than usual, that Madeleine went forth to seek him.

She found the old man sitting on the bench; leaning back against the frame of the rose-wreathed arbor, seemingly sleeping a sweet sleep. Not a feature of his fine old face was disturbed, not a tress of his silvery hair disheveled. His hands rested together on his lap; a blooming rose remained in his relaxed fingers. His favorite spaniel lay at his feet, quietly looking up into his calm face. His two white pigeons were near—the one perched upon his shoulder, cooing and pecking fondly at his cheek, the other flying in playful circles around his head. Madeleine spoke to him once—twice—thrice—and receiving no answer, took his hand. The lingering rose fell to his feet; the hand, the form, was icy cold. The loving spirit that had warmed it for more than ninety years, had left it for a higher sphere. Such had been his Euthanasy.

Etoile wept vehemently over his death; but the tears of youth are like morning dew or April showers—quickly dried.

He was buried quietly beneath a great old elm-tree near the shore. By his own long previously expressed wish, no marble tomb oppressed his body's last sleeping-place. Etoile would remember his grave, and the angel of the resurrection would know where to find him; that was enough, he had said.

By his will, which he had executed during a lucid interval at Heathville, where his monomania was unsuspected, and which was duly opened the day after the funeral, it was found that he had left the whole of his vast property to his grand-niece, Etoile L'Orient, and appointed his good friend, Mr. Julius Luxmore, the guardian of his heiress. Not a single allusion to king, kingdom, or princess, betrayed his his partial insanity. A codicil to the same instrument

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emancipated his faithful servant Madeleine, and her son Frivole.

This codicil, strange as the circumstance may at first sight seem *pleased* Mr. Luxmore. He had always dreaded the secret influence of Madeleine over her nursling, without well knowing how to obviate it. Now, however, the way was clear.

And he informed the quadroon that herself and her son being manumitted by their late master's will, must forthwith quit the Island.

At first, poor Madeleine was dismayed. The mild service of her master had been to her, protection, safety and support. The shores of the Island had bounded her world. She knew no other. To leave the Isle, to abandon her young nursling!—freedom under such conditions struck her as an overwhelming misfortune. She actually reversed Catiline's immortal speech, and exclaimed—"What's set free, but banished?" She tearfully represented to Mr. Luxmore, her strong attachment to her home, and to her young charge on the one hand, and on the other, her own inexperience, her helplessness, and her dread of the world of strangers.

But Julius on his side described in glowing colors, the "world beyond," dwelling with enthusiasm upon the great advantages it possessed for her own advancement, and above all, for that of her beloved son Frivole. He also fired the mind of the boy with a vehement desire to tread those unknown shores. And between the eloquence of her patron, and the importunity of her son, poor Madeleine became resigned, if not reconciled to depart.

Mr. Luxmore also voluntarily promised to take the mother and son to New York, and to procure for them suitable employment.

And Julius kept his word—being quite willing to put himself to thus much inconvenience, for the sake of separ

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ating the nurse from her charge, and ingratiating himself with Etoile.

For, though the young creature sadly lamented the loss of her "Maman," yet having been persuaded by Mr. Luxmore, that it was all for Madeleine's good, she was not only reconciled to her departure, but even grateful to him for taking her away.

"You are going to the beautiful world beyond, Maman," she said, "and some day I, too, shall follow you." And unwilling to cloud the departure of her nurse with a single complaint, the girl had heroically abstained from expressing the keen regret she felt at losing her. When the sail that wafted Madeleine and her son away, was lost to view, Etoile abandoned herself to weeping for a while, but on recovering she took herself to task, saying—

"How selfish I am to weep, because Maman has gone to the beautiful world beyond! I ought to be glad, because I myself wanted to go there so much." And she repelled grief as a sin of selfishness, and went and got her drawing materials, and occupied herself with painting from memory a portrait of "Maman."

Mr. Luxmore performed his promise, that is to say, he conveyed the mother and son to New York, procured for Madeleine the place of chambermaid, and for Frivole that of waiter, in a third-class hotel, and abandoned them to their fate. Now, whether this change of fortune was considered "favorable" by the servants of the late Monsieur Henri De L'Ile, remains an open question.

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CHAPTER XXXVI.

ETOILE COMES INTO HER ESTATE.

"But what are these grave thoughts to thee?
For restlessly, impatiently,
Thou strivest, strugglest to be free:
Thy only dream is liberty."—*Longfellow.*

MR. LUXMORE returned early in November, bringing many rare presents for Etoile, consisting of costly books and pictures, an elegant paint-box, furnished with drawing materials, model plaster casts and marble statuettes, an exquisitely sweet-toned lute, and a collection of fine music.

It was in Etoile's boudoir that these attractive presents were displayed to her delighted eyes.

"Ah, how beautiful! how glorious! how heavenly! must be that world, whence all these charming things come!" she exclaimed.

Mr. Luxmore smiled at her hallucination.

"Ah! when shall I, too, see that lovely world?"

"When you are married, Etoile."

"When I am married,"—softly repeated this child of nature—"and shall *I* ever be married?"

"Certainly, fair one."

"And to whom shall I be married?" she inquired, looking up in innocent surprise.

"Do you not know then?" asked Julius Luxmore, gazing wistfully into her eyes.

"No, indeed, Mr. Luxmore, no one ever told me," she answered artlessly, without dropping her pure unconscious eyes.

"I thought you understood that you were destined to be my bride."

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"Your bride? No, indeed, I did not know that before, Mr. Luxmore! Did uncle wish it?"

"Certainly, my fair one. Besides, it is your interest."

"I need no inducement to obey my dearest uncle, Mr. Luxmore; but when are we to be married then?"

"Are you in a hurry?"

"Oh, yes!" answered the innocent creature with a deep sigh of aspiration.

"But why?" inquired Mr. Luxmore, curiously.

"Oh!" she replied, with another deep inspiration, "be cause I do so *long* to go to the beautful world beyond!"

"And you wish to get married that you may go thither?"

"Oh! yes, indeed!" she said, clasping her hands fervently. "When shall we be married, Mr. Luxmore?"

"In some few months from this."

"So long! Oh, Mr. Luxmore! why can it not be now?"

"Because, my lovely girl, you have not yet reached a marriageable age."

"And what age is that?"

"No matter, my dear, you have not reached it."

"But, oh, Mr. Luxmore, how can you say that? I have read in history, again and again, of princes and princesses married in their cradles. There was the Princess Elizabeth of Hungary, and the Prince of Thuringia, and many others."

"But they were princes."

"And am not I a princess?"

"Yes, my sweet! by virtue of your beauty, genius and goodness, you are a princess; but in no other wise," replied Julius Luxmore, thinking that the time had now come for this explanation.

"How, in no other wise?"

Mr. Luxmore proceeded to explain to her that the Island kingdom, king and princess, had been merely a pleasant

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phantasy on the part of her late uncle. Not for the world would Mr. Luxmore have risked the danger that might have grown out of his communicating to the young heiress the fact that Monsieur Henri De L'Ile was of unsound mind, and, consequently, legally incapacitated to execute the instrument which constituted himself, Julius Luxmore, the sole guardian of the young heiress and her large estate.

Etoile received the news with less surprise than might have been expected.

"I am satisfied now," she said, "upon a point that for a long time troubled me."

"And what was that?"

"I used to pick out our Island in the map of the United States, and I found that it was an adjunct to the State of Maryland. Therefore, you see, I could not understand how it should be a little kingdom."

"And you are not much disappointed to find that it is not?"

"Oh, no, no; on the contrary, I am glad to understand clearly my real condition."

"And yet, fair one, in some sense our beautiful Island is really a kingdom, and we are its sovereigns." Julius Luxmore henceforth always spoke in the first person plural thus associating himself with Etoile and her estate—it was to accustom her to consider him as a joint proprietor.

"How then, Mr. Luxmore, since, our Isle"—(the simple girl followed his lead in the use of the plural pronoun)—"is not a kingdom in all respects, can it be a kingdom in some senses? and how then are we in *any* sense sovereigns?"

"Thus, my sweet. Our Island is our undivided possession, cut off from all the rest of the world ——"

—— "The beautiful world!"—interrupted Etoile.

"Over this insulated possession we have far more power than a king has over his kingdom. We can let it, lease it

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sell it, or bequeath it to whomsoever we will! A king cannot so dispose of his kingdom."

"No, certainly not."

"And then again, my fair one, we have more authority over our people than a sovereign has over his subjects. We can hire, sell, or bequeath any man, woman or child among them to whomsoever we please. A sovereign cannot so dispose of his subjects."

"Assuredly not; but this superior power we possess over ours, should only make us more mindful of our people's welfare and happiness.—So my dear uncle taught me."

"He was right," said the wily Julius, "and that was the reason why I took Madeleine and Frivole to New York, where they will be so much better off."

"Oh yes, you are so good, replied the innocent creature. And then she fell into a deep reverie, and wondered why it was that *she* so often felt that Mr. Luxmore was *not* so good as he seemed. And this fine insight she blamed as an injustice; its suppression she regarded as insincerity; its confession she seemed to consider almost a duty. Yet the unwillingness to give pain restrained her communication; she resolved silently to combat what she considered an uncharitable feeling. And thus her natural instincts, which might have saved her, were conquered as sins. After this little struggle with herself, she spoke again.

"To return to our first subject, Mr. Luxmore, why may not I who am so nearly a princess, have the privilege of one, why may I not marry now, and go to the beautiful world beyond?"

"Is there in the civilized world, another young girl so unsophisticated as this sweet maiden?" said Julius Luxmore to himself, as he met her pure clear blue eyes raised in innocent inquiry to his face; he answered.

"Because, my sweet, not being really a princess, not

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having a royal father to give you away, your marriage would not be legal."

The conversation here closed for the time.

Julius Luxmore had formed the determination to spend the winter in Paris. The beautiful Island was in summer a delightful residence; but in winter, its ice-bound shore was to this roving Sybarite the walls of a prison, while distant Paris seemed to him a paradise of freedom and pleasure.

But in order to leave Etoile with safety to his own interests, there were many previous arrangements to be made. It was now, as I have said, early in November. He wished to sail for Paris about the first of December. The time was short, and it was necessary to bestir himself.

First of all, with a portion of the ready money left in his trust for the heiress, he purchased a small wild farm, some twenty miles inland from the Northumberland shore. Then he drafted from the Island slaves every young and middle-aged man, and several women, and sent them off to "Black Thorns Farm," his new purchase, where he placed them under the care of a competent overseer.

Thus there were left on the Island, only aged men and women and children.

For the service of the young heiress, he had selected an honest, affectionate old negro woman called Moll, a hunch-backed old man, misnamed Timon, and their grand-daughter Peggy. These were directed to take up their abode in the mansion house, to supply the place of Madeleine and Frivole and to protect and wait upon Etoile.

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CHAPTER XXXVII.

ETOILE LEFT ALONE.

"Her sweet song died, and a vague unrest,
And a nameless longing filled her breast—
A wish that she hardly dared to own,
For something better than she had known."—*Whittier.*

Not until all these arrangements had been completed did Julius Luxmore announce to Etoile his intention of leaving the Island to spend the winter in Paris.

The young creature looked dismayed.

"Oh, Mr. Luxmore, you will not go and leave me also! My dear uncle is dead; Madeleine and Frivole have gone; winter is at hand, when I cannot go out; you will not leave me alone on the Island all these dreary months!"

"My sweet girl, I go at the call of duty. Besides you will not be alone. There is still a gang of young women and a force of old men on the Island, and in the house you have Timon, Moll, and their granddaughter Peggy."

"I know, and they are good creatures, and I will do all I can to make them happy; but, Mr. Luxmore, I cannot make companions of them," replied the maiden, with a certain mild majesty.

"But, my fair girl, you can seek companionship in your books, your music, and your drawing. You can employ these winter days in perfecting yourself in belles-lettres and arts, and let me see when I return what progress you have made; for, Etoile, with the earliest spring I will be here again."

Etoile smiled, but the smile was so sad that Julius Luxmore hastened to say:

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"You would not detain me here against my duty, would you, my fair?"

"No, oh no! it is selfish in me to repine. I will do so no longer. Go, Mr. Luxmore, to the lovely, distant world; but come back to me with the flowers and birds of spring," said Etoile, and with a brighter smile she offered her hand.

"With the earliest birds and flowers of spring, I will be again beside my princess, and claim the hand of my promised bride," exclaimed Julius Luxmore, gallantly lifting the tips of her fingers to his lips. Then, with a smile and bow he left her, and went to make his final preparations for departure.

From this day a man with telescope at hand was constantly stationed on the look-out from the beach, to watch for and hail the first up-bay vessel. For it was Julius Luxmore's intention to go to Baltimore, thence to New York, whence he expected to find the earliest opportunity of sailing for Havre.

He held himself prepared to leave at half an hour's warning.

It was at sunrise on a fine, clear morning, early in the month, that the man on the look-out reported a sail bearing up the bay.

Mr Luxmore ordered him to exchange his telescope for a speaking trumpet, and when she drew sufficiently near, to hail her, to take on a passenger.

The man obeyed, and the clipper came to anchor within half a mile of the Island, and sent her long-boat ashore.

Julius Luxmore, all ready to depart, sent his trunks and boxes on board the boat, and only waited for the appearance of Etoile, to take leave of her before going.

He knew that he had not to wait long.

Etoile, fresh, blooming, and beautiful as a rose, came down from her morning toilet, and stood beside him on the piazza.

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"You are going then, this morning, Mr. Luxmore?" she asked, trying to smile and to speak cheerfully.

"Yes, my fairest and best beloved; I am going. It is duty that turns me from your side."

"And duty must always be obeyed, I know," she said.

Julius Luxmore looked at her for a moment. He seemed to realize with a strange thrill that the fascinating creature beside him was no longer a child.

He thought her, as she stood there, the most beautiful creature that his eyes had ever beheld. Her dress of deep black by the contrast of its shadow only threw out into stronger light the dazzling clearness of her snowy skin, the brilliant bloom of her cheeks and lips, and the sunny splendor of her golden ringlets.

He longed to clasp her to his heart and press a kiss upon her rosy lips. But he durst not as yet. He never had dared to embrace Etoile. For though in her unconscious innocence she had freely promised to become his wife; and though, as long as his endearments had been confined to words, she had received them very quietly, yet he had noticed that whenever he ventured to carress her, she shrank as a sensitive plant shrinks at the slightest touch.

Therefore he abstained from a parting embrace, lest he should alarm her delicacy, and fatally repel her confidence. And thus, alone, helpless, and in his power as she seemed, his gentle and submissive ward, and his promised bride as she was, her maiden modesty, and native dignity effectually protected her from all undue familiarity on the part of Mr. Julius Luxmore, until, as he promised himself, the law and the church should place her irrevocably in his power.

"The boat waits—I must tear myself away from you, my own Etoile," he said, taking her hand.

She gently withdrew it; but affectionately replied:

"I will go down to the beach with you, Mr. Luxmore. Surely you do not think I would part with you on the

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threshold of the house, when I might walk with you down to the shore, and watch you even to the ship?"

"My darling girl, but it is so cold for my Etoile."

"No, I had prepared for the cold," replied the child, beckoning her sable maid, Peggy, and taking from her hands a large fleecy white shawl, in which she wrapped her head and shoulders.

They then went down to the shore, where the boat waited. The baggage was already stowed, and the sailors were impatient.

"Remember your promise to write every week, and to send Timon to mail the letters at the Heathville post-office," said Mr. Luxmore.

"Oh, yes, you may be sure that I will never miss doing so. It will be my best comfort," replied Etoile.

"And if you should ever be ill enough to need a physician's services, which is not at all likely, send for old Doctor Crumpton."

"Yes, I will remember and obev you in all things, my dear guardian."

"And now, farewell, my beloved and beautiful Etoile," —he said, lifting her fair hands to his lips—"farewell for the winter."

"Yes, farewell for the *winter;* but with the first birds and blossoms of spring you have promised to come back."

"To claim the white hand of my beautiful bride," replied Mr. Luxmore, pressing her slender fingers. Then he relinquished them and jumped into the boat, which was immediately pushed off, and where he stood looking back and waving his hat as long as he could see the fair Etoile lingering on the shore.

Julius Luxmore's voyage was rapid. Favored with a fair wind, he soon reached Baltimore, whence he took the cars to New York, where he arrived early upon the morning

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of the day when the regular packet was to sail for Havre, and in which he immediately took a berth. The passage across the Atlantic was equally prosperous, and early in the new year he found himself at Paris.

Mr. Luxmore's immense wealth, or rather that of his ward, which he freely appropriated, enabled him to enter extensively into the English and American society of the French metropolis.

He contrived to get admission into an English Club, and by his adroit maneuvering, he learned, for the first time, a fact of the greatest importance to his plans; it was that of the decision of the Court of Arches, recognizing the legality of the marriage of Victoire L'Orient with the only daughter of Sir Parke Morelle.

And Julius Luxmore discovered with a thrill of joy, that the beautiful Etoile was not only the actual owner of the rich Island, but also the sole heiress of one of the wealthiest estates in the West of England.

Thus, in birth and in fortune, as well as in beauty and accomplishments, she was a match for a prince! But she should never know it! He would guard her more jealously than ever, and not until she had become his wife, should he take her from the Island, present her to her aristocratic relatives, or claim in her behalf the Island estate to which the documents in his possession would enable him to establish her right.

And he longed with eager, vehement, passionate impatience for the time to come that should secure to him the possession of this peerless prize.

He resolved that their marriage should be delayed no longer than her sixteenth birthday, which would arrive the ensuing midsummer. To pass the intervening time with as little sense of tedium as possible, he plunged into all the gayeties of the French capital. Then he made a short tou-

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through Italy. And finally, toward the spring, returned to Paris, to collect *bijouterie* for Etoile, and to prepare for his homeward voyage.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE SOLITARY MAIDEN.

"What shall I do with all the days and hours
That must be counted ere I see thy face?
How shall I charm the interval that low'rs
Between this time and that sweet time of grace?"—*Mrs. Kemble*

Etoile, left alone with her servants upon the Island, found the time pass less heavily than she had dared to anticipate.

The winter was less severe than usual. The atmosphere was elastic and bracing, and the Island maiden was enabled to pass part of every day in the open air.

Her plan of self-improvement was conscientiously carried out. The earlier hours of every day were devoted to a course of reading. Finding herself wearied at about twelve o'clock, she would put on a warm hood and sack, buckle on her skates, and have an hour's fine skating on the frozen bosom of her own crystal creek. The first hours of the afternoon she employed in practicing music, painting, or embroidery. Growing tired of sitting, at about four o'clock she would order her pony to the door, and spring into her saddle for an hour's gallop around her circular race-course. Or if the weather confined her within doors, so that she could neither skate at noon nor ride at sunset, she substituted for both those recreations a visit to her sheltered birds and flowers, that always afforded her ample entertainment. The long winter evenings were employed in needle-work, or in light reading. And upon some occasions, she would

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permit her two aged domestics to pass the evening in her parlor, where she would entertain them by reading aloud some interesting book, or else, while busily plying her needle, she would listen to some wild and wonderful legend of ghost, wizard or demon, related by some one or the other of the old people.

Then she had the weekly excitement of receiving or answering letters from her guardian, and the permanent interest of anticipating his return.

Thus her daily employments helped off the week, and the weekly mail-day served to mark off the months, and hurry forward the period for Mr. Luxmore's return and her own liberation.

Her own liberation! That, at last, was the great object of Etoile's aspiration!

So the winter wore away, and spring was at hand.

About this time, having read all her books, learned all her music, copied all her pictures, and worked embroideries from all her patterns, and having no material of any sort to labor upon, Etoile bethought herself of painting her own miniature, as a present to her guardian. So one morning she conveyed her drawing materials to her bed-room, arranged them upon her toilet table, and seated herself before the mirror, to commence operations. In three days, the miniature was completed to her satisfaction. And an exquisite face it was—a golden-haired, blue-eyed and rosy-cheeked blonde, beautiful as an angel. Etoile was charmed with her success; having completed the picture, she could not leave it, but continued to play with the subject, by changing the color of the drapery, first, from white to rose-color, next to lilac, then to blue, then to black, and finally, after sponging out the black, restoring it to its original snow.

Then, feeling at a loss what to do next, she resolved to paint a miniature of herself with black hair, eyes and eye-

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brows, to see how she would look thus. She took her place at the mirror, and went to work; and as she proceeded, Pygmalion-like, she fell in love with her own creation. She worked at it with enthusiasm; but as the picture grew toward perfection, her artistic mind discovered that in contrast with those darkest eyes and blackest ringlets, the blonde complexion was too dazzlingly fair for harmony—that she must put in darker and richer tints in the lights and shadows of the face. The subject possessed for her a strange spell of fascination. Under the force of powerful inspiration, she perfected the picture.

And then, why, as she gazed upon her finished work, did her heart swell with a strange trouble, her lips tremble, and her eyes fill with tears? What was there in that beautiful pale face, with its large, dark, mournful eyes, and falling vail of shadowy ringlets, to attract her with such painful power?

She had unconsciously drawn the likeness of her mother!

She selected from her numerous trinkets a plain gold locket, enclosed the miniature therein, and hung it around her neck, wondering all the while, why she felt so strongly inclined to wear this picture!

She placed her own miniature in a similar locket, and reserved it as a gift for her guardian, whose arrival might now be soon expected. And at length, early in May, old Timon brought from the post-office a letter announcing the speedy advent of Mr. Luxmore.

And from the day of the reception of the letter, Etoile prepared all things to welcome with eclat her returning guardian.

And at last he came.

It was high noon, and Etoile, dressed in a white muslin gown and straw hat, stood upon the front piazza, about to take her daily before-dinner walk, when one of the negroes came running up the avenue toward the house, bringing the intelligence that a vessel had come to anchor about three

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miles out in the Bay, and that a boat put off from her side was rapidly rowed toward the Island.

Etoile, with a cry of joy, hastened down the avenue toward the landing-place, which she reached just as the long-boat, containing Mr. Luxmore and all his baggage, rowed by six sailors, was pushed upon the sands.

Julius Luxmore sprang out and hastened toward Etoile. The beautiful creature looked so attractive as she stood there with her straw hat hanging on her arm, her snowy drapery and golden ringlets floating on the breeze, that Luxmore's first impulse was to catch her to his bosom in a warm embrace. But she arrested him, as with her innocent child-like look of gladness she sprang forward, offering both her hands, and exclaiming:

"Welcome home, my dear guardian!"

He caught her offered hands, pressed them, shook them heartily, and lifted them to his lips, saying:

"Oh, Etoile! my bride! how enchanted I am to be with you again!"

Then leaving a command with the negroes to unlade the boat, and convey the baggage to the house, he drew the arm of his ward within his own, and they walked up the avenue, homeward, both conversing—he with consummate art, she with guileless simplicity. They reached the house, and Mr. Luxmore retired to his chamber, to prepare for dinner, which was soon served.

The afternoon was spent in unpacking boxes, filled with rich presents, which were displayed before the delighted eyes of Etoile.

"And these are all for my promised bride," he said.

"Oh, thank you! thank you!" exclaimed the maiden, in sincere gratitude, as one beautiful article after another dazzled her sight.

"Oh! how glorious must be the world beyond, whence

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all these wondrous beauties come," she said, for perhaps the hundredth time.

"Well! come midsummer and your birthday, which is also to be your wedding-day, and you shall see that 'beautiful world beyond.'"

The artless creature responded by a radiant smile.

The costly gifts were then all arranged in her own suite of apartments.

The evening was passed in the moonlit and vine-shaded piazza, where Julius Luxmore related the events of his tour in Italy and his life in Paris—or, at least, so much as was proper for the hearing of Etoile, who listened with deep interest.

"And now at last you are here!" she said. "You have come back with the earliest birds, and flowers of spring, even as you promised!"

"And I shall always keep my word to my beauteous bride," he answered, gallantly.

"And you find the Island in its very loveliest looks! The Isle is never so charming as in May, when the grass and the foliage wear their greenest and most delicate hue; when the spring flowers are all in bloom, and the orchard and groves are forests of blossoms; and the birds are singing as they build their nests, or feed their young!"

"Yes, it is all lovely! all charming! but the fairest blooming flower and the sweetest singing bird of all, is my own Etoile! my promised bride."

"And yet to you, who come from the beautiful beyond, this poor Isle cannot look so fair as it does to me who never saw any thing brighter!"

Luxmore smiled at her hallucination, and said to himself—

"Has *any* one *ever* seen any place brighter?" But while he asked that question only in his heart, he replied to her by his lips saying—

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"Come your wedding-day, and you shall see that beautiful beyond!"

And again the artless maiden responded by a smile of innocent delight.

So passed the first afternoon of Mr. Luxmore's return. And from that time to two weeks previous to their appointed wedding, Julius Luxmore never left his betrothed.

Five weeks passed away like a dream, and brought July. Etoile knew that she was to be married on the fifteenth. As it was necessary that Mr. Luxmore should visit the main land to obtain the marriage license, the services of a clergyman and a lawyer, and also the rich trousseau, including the bridal vail and jewels, that had already been ordered for Etoile, and as he wished to reach Baltimore in time to join in the celebration of the great national festival, he informed his betrothed that he should set out from the Isle on the first of the month.

"Three days to go to Baltimore, six to transact business there, and three to return, bringing the attorney, the clergyman, and the bridal regalia for my princess!" exclaimed Mr. Luxmore, after detailing his plan to her.

"So, by the fifteenth of July, you will be with me again!" she said.

"Aye! and on the morning of the fifteenth we will be married, and immediately after we shall sail for London, where I shall present you to your English relatives."

"English relatives:" exclaimed the maiden, in astonishment—"have I English relatives, then?"

"Yes, my love, did you not know it?" inquired the wily Julius.

"Why, of course not! I did not know I had a relative in the world! You must have been aware that I was ignorant of the existence of any kindred of mine," she said, as a feeling of cold distrust chilled her heart.

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"I supposed, my love, that you had heard of your mother's family."

"No, no!" exclaimed the maiden, in a voice of deep emotion. "No one would ever tell me of my dear lost mother. I have asked a thousand and a thousand times, but could not learn who she was, or where she lived, or when she died. It is so sorrowful to have never had a mother either living or dead. For though I never saw my mother, if I only knew the place where she sleeps her last sleep, I should sometime go and water the turf with my tears. Mr. Luxmore, can you tell me any thing about my mother?"—she asked, clasping her hands, and fixing her eyes on his face in the earnestness of her entreaty. "Oh, Mr. Luxmore, please, can you inform me of any thing relating to my dear mother?"

"No, nothing whatever, my sweet love."

"Of my mother's relations, then? Has she sisters or perhaps parents living, who would tell me all about her?—Oh, *do* answer me, Mr. Luxmore!"

"My best love you shall go to England, see your relations, and know all—after we are married."

"After we are married!—after we are married! *Why must every thing be deferred until after we are married!*" inquired Etoile of herself, as the same cold distrust chilled her heart. But the next moment she reproached herself for this incipient suspicion, saying mentally—

"I am unjust and ungenerous! My guardian must know best! My guardian *must* be right." And to atone for her momentary doubt, she held out her hand and said submissively—

"As you will, dear Mr. Luxmore. But—after we are married, you will help me to find out all about my dear unknown mother."

"I will, so help me Heaven, sweet Etoile!" he replied lifting her hand to his lips.

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And the next morning, with a promise, wind and tide favoring, to be back in two weeks, Julius Luxmore took a tender and respectful leave of his affianced bride, went on board a passing schooner, and sailed for Baltimore.

Etoile went to her room and wrote a letter to her nurse Madeleine, in New York, informing her that her foster child was to be married to Mr. Luxmore, on the fifteenth instant. This letter was mailed at Heathville.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ESTELLE'S HOME.

"She dwells amid the city:
The great humanity which beats
Its life, along the stony streets,
Like a strong, unsunned river,
In a self-made course, is ever
Rolling on, rolling on."—*Mrs. Browning.*

THE time was the 15th of July. The place to which I will introduce you was a narrow, two-storied, red brick house, in a humble but decent alley, in one of the most crowded neighborhoods of New York city.

The street door opened immediately into a tiny parlor, furnished in the simplest style.

The walls were covered with paper of a light-grey pattern; the floor laid with a grave Kidderminster carpet; and the single front window draped with plain white muslin curtains. Over the mantle-piece hung the portrait of a very handsome man in the early prime of life. Each side of the chimney the recesses were furnished with book-shelves, filled with plain looking but standard volumes. On the opposite side of the room sat a horse-hair sofa, while half a dozen

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reception chairs of the same material sat around the walls. A guitar and a music-stand stood in one corner. A plain mahogany centre-table occupied the middle of the floor. Beside this was a large horse-hair lounging-chair.

Reclining in the chair, with her elbow resting on the table, and her head supported by her hand, sat a beautiful woman of perhaps thirty years of age, clothed in deep mourning. By the elegant form and graceful attitude; by the clear cut, classic features, the delicate pallor of the complexion, the slender-arched, jet-black eyebrows, the large, languid dark eyes, with their sweeping length of lash, the full and sweetly-curved lips, and the shadowy vail of falling black ringlets, we might have recognized Estelle. Incurable sorrow was still impressed upon her brow, occasional sighs escaped her lips. This look of suffering had become habitual, these frequent sighs were involuntary, unconscious, yet they helped to relieve her oppressed bosom and keep her heart from utterly breaking.

On her lap lay a medical book that she had been studying to enable her better to understand the case of a sick woman whom, in her rounds of charity, she had lately discovered, and whom she attended.

And now the book lay idly open; with her elbow resting on the table, her forehead bowed upon her palm, her dark ringlets falling low around her lovely face, her dark eyes fixed mournfully on the floor, her mind had gone far back into the past, and was lost in reverie.

The street-door opened softly, and Susan Copsewood entered the parlor.

So deep was the reverie of Estelle, that she was unconscious of the presence of her faithful maid. The lady did not often weep, her grief was too deep and lasting for such ephemeral relief. Yet now tear after tear gathered under her drooping lashes, and rolled slowly down her cheeks.

Susan looked at her mistress, in deep sympathy, but did

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not immediately address her. Isolation from all persons of her own rank in life, and constant companionship with her mistress, had refined and elevated the character of this faithful girl, until she had become more the friend than the servant of Estelle. And there seemed a fitness in this relation.

At length the lady with a deep sigh wiped away her tears, shook off her depression, and looked up. Her first glance alighted upon Susan.

"Ah, you are come, child?"

"Yes, dear lady," answered the girl, but her looks and tones were so full of surprise, uneasiness, and sympathy, which she refrained in delicacy from otherwise expressing, that her mistress, with a faint smile, answered her mute appeal.

"It is nothing, Susan; at least, nothing new. This, you know, is the birthday of my little child—my little child on whom I was permitted to gaze but once, before my eyes closed in insensibility, and her's in death—my little child whom I never saw but once in life, but whom I have seen a thousand times in dreams! She would have been fifteen years old to-day, Susan. Ah, if my little child had lived, I should not to-day have been so desolate. Yet it is a strange, sweet thought that I *have been* a mother?"

"Say that you are a mother, dear lady—the mother of an angel who is fifteen years old to-day, in Heaven. A mother never, never, never can lose her infant child, unless——"

"Unless?"

"——she loses her own soul, so that she cannot enter the company of those who 'are of the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

"True, true!"

"Then grieve no more to-day, dear lady."

"I will not, Susan. Indeed, I know it is very morbid to

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do so; and only on this anniversary do I shed a few tears over her memory."

"Well, give that habit up, dear lady; and weep no more to-day, because your child is keeping her birthday in Heaven."

"Because my Etoile is shining among her kindred stars!"

"Your Etoile, dear madame?"

"Yes, Susan; that was her name. It was a girlish fancy of mine, before her birth, in case she should prove a daughter, to call her Etoile, because her family name was L'Orient, and Etoile L'Orient, you know, Susan, by a free translation means 'Morning Star.' She was my first-born, my only one, my morning star—how quickly lost to mortal eyes in the light of the eternal day! Enough of my star, now shining among the celestial constellations! Tell me of my poor patient, Susan, how is she?"

"Madame, she is restless and moaning. She asks for you continually."

"Then I must go to her immediately."

"Do wait until the cool of the evening, dear lady; it is very hot this afternoon."

"No, I cannot wait while a sick one is moaning for me. Go up stairs and bring my things."

Susan went, and soon returned with the black lace bonnet, thick vail, silk scarf, parasol, gloves, which was the lady's out-door dress. Estelle quickly arrayed herself, and attended by Susan, soon left the house.

A walk of half a mile through one of the most thronged thoroughfares of New York, brought them to an ancient street, into which "improvement" had not even peeped. It was built up on either side with houses that had once been tall, stately and aristocratic edifices, but were now old, dilapidated and leaning dwellings, tenanted by the poorest lodgers.

Before one of the most forlorn of these—a dingy

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tumbling, three-storied house, the lady and her attendant paused.

They entered the dirty door-way, passed up the hall, ascended the stairs, turned to the right, and entered a poor but clean, cool and shady room, where the walls were well whitewashed, and the floor well sanded, the two front windows darkened with slat blinds, and the air refreshed with aromatic vinegar.

On a cot near the centre of the room lay the sick woman. A clean, white counterpane lightly covered her form. A stand, with a pitcher of ice-water stood by her side.

The woman was a quadroon of about forty-five years of age, who had evidently once been very handsome, but whose fine face was now worn down by sickness, want, and care.

In a word, she was our old acquaintance, Madeleine, whom nine months of city life, inexperience, and ill-luck had reduced to this pass. Months previous to this, her son, Frivole, had accepted a situation as traveling valet to a young gentleman going to Europe. And after his departure, Madeleine, disgusted with her life as chambermaid in a large hotel, had left her place, taken a room, and commenced business as laundress. Sickness had overtaken her, in the midst of her labors, and reduced her to her present condition. As yet, Estelle knew nothing of her except her name and need. Only a week before, she had been told of this subject of charity, had sought her out, found her in a wretched bed in a filthy attic room, in this same house, abandoned by all, and wasting with want and with a low fever. As her condition would not permit her to be removed to any distance, Estelle found a vacant room on the first floor, front, had it thoroughly scoured and whitewashed, hung those cool, dark green slat blinds to the windows, and put in that cot, with a spring mattrass and fresh, snowy draperies. Then she had her patient laid in a bath, washed, dressed in clean clothes, and removed to the apartment.

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And for the few days that had elapsed since her improved circumstances, the woman had visibly amended.

The lady now drew forward a chair and seated herself beside her patient, took up a palm-leaf fan that lay upon the counterpane, and began to fan the panting sufferer, while she inquired in a gentle voice—

"How do you find yourself, this evening, Madeleine?"

"More comfortable, but very weak, my lady."

"It is the very warm weather that enfeebles you, but we shall soon have a thunder shower that will cool and purify the air, and you will grow better."

"On the contrary, my dear lady, I am sinking slowly but surely."

"You should not despond, Madeleine."

"I do not, my lady. I am sinking easily, easily, as a tired baby dropping asleep on its mother's bosom."

"I am nearly sure that you will recover, and see happier days, Madeleine," replied the lady, hopefully.

"Oh, Madam!" said the quadroon, fixing her glittering eyes upon the face of her benefactress. "When you look and speak so cheerfully, how the likeness does beam out!"

"What likeness, my poor Madeleine?"

"Your likeness to my little nursling, dear lady. I never did see such a strong likeness in all my life, although you are so dark and she was so fair, and though you are always so grave, and she was so gay. It is as if the same picture were copied in light upon one plate and in shadow upon another. And then you both have the same inflexion of voice and turn of the eyes, though hers were blue as heaven and yours are so dark. But I grow impertinent, dear lady. Pray, forgive a poor woman's garrulity. I make too free, I know."

"Oh, not so! You loved your little nursling very much then."

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"Oh, I did!—I did, dear lady!" said Madeleine, covering her face with her hands and beginning to weep.

"Madeleine—I was told that you wished particularly to see me," said Estelle, with the view of distracting her grief.

"Oh, yes Madam, it was for her sweet sake I wished to see you this afternoon. Forgive me, dear lady, for troubling you so much."

"You do not trouble me the least in the world. You console me when you let me see that I can do you good. Now tell me how I can serve you or your little nursling?"

"Dear lady, I wished to pray you to write a letter for me to my darling."

"This afternoon, Madeleine?"

"Yes, Madam."

"But you have too much fever to dictate it, Madeleine."

"Ah, dear lady, never mind the fever in my veins if you can make it convenient to write to her to-day."

"All times are convenient to me, my poor Madeleine; but why press the matter this afternoon, when you are so feverish? Why not not wait until to-morrow morning, when you will feel more refreshed, Madeleine?"

"Ah! how much you look like her now! But I must write to her to-day, for this, dear lady, is her birthday."

"Her birthday?" replied Estelle, feeling some interest but not the slightest suspicion of the truth hidden in this coincidence.

"Yes, dear lady, it is her birthday. And as she has no mother or father to remember it for her, I must do so."

"Poor child, she is an orphan, then?"

"Yes, my lady, or rather worse than orphaned from her birth. But then I always loved her as my own. She was given into my sole care in her second summer, and never was separated from me from that time until about nine months ago. This is the first birthday she ever remembered to have passed away from her Maman Madeleine."

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"And how old is she now?" inquired the lady taking a kind interest in her patient's conversation.

"My little Etoile is fifteen years old to-day."

"Ah! !——"

With this sharp and sudden cry, Estelle sprang forward, her hands clenched together, the blood rushing in torrents to her heart, her whole frame shaken by an inward storm; —and then in an instant, she grew livid and sank back half, fainting in her chair. The sudden revelation—the shock, the truth, the joy had overwhelmed—had nearly killed her.

Susan had heard and understood—Susan sprang to her assistance, bathed her face with the ice-water, forced her to swallow some, and held the sponge of aromatic vinegar to her nostrils.

She said to the sick woman, who had raised up in bed and was gazing in surprise at this scene:

"It is a sudden pain to which my mistress is subject. Do not be afraid—it will be over soon."

And, in fact, just then, Estelle lifting herself, put away the offered assistance of her attendant, made a supreme effort, and though still pale as a lily, and tremulous as an aspen, she controlled her voice sufficiently to say in steady tones:

"That will do, Susan. Sit down."

And when her attendant withdrew from her side, and took a seat at the foot of the cot, Estelle turned to the invalid and quietly observed:

"I fear, my poor Madeleine, that in your weak state my sudden indisposition must have startled your nerves. But you perceive that it is quite over with me now, so pray be composed."

"Dear lady, never mind me. I was only pained to see you suffer."

"'Twas but for a moment; 'tis over now. Come, let us talk of something else—your nursling——"

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"Dear lady, do not trouble yourself about the letter now."

"Yes, but I *prefer* to do it," replied Estelle, and then, anxious to hear repeated every particular, so as to have confirmed that intelligence that seemed too joyful to be real, she said:

"You informed me that her name was——"

"Etoile L'Orient, my lady."

"Yes!—and her age?" demanded the mother breathlessly.

"Fifteen years to-day, Madam."

"Yes! yes!—and you have had her in charge how long?"

"From the day when, at one year old, she was brought from France to L'Orient Island, where I lived with my master, her uncle, Monsieur Henri—I had charge of her until last November."

"Where is she now?"

"On L'Orient Isle, where she has, since twelve months old, resided."

"And her parents?"

"I never saw either of them. Her father, Monsieur Victoire L'Orient, was lost on the Mercury. Her mother, an English lady of rank, lived with her own family I believe."

"And the young girl, Etoile,—did she know, had she ever been told any thing of her parents?"

"Of her father, only that he was lost—of her mother, nothing."

"'Of her mother, nothing!'" repeated Estelle, in a tone of anguish.

"Yes! it *was* bad, was it not, lady? But I was forbidden to sadden her young heart by speaking of her lost parents. And yet the innocent little heart was often sad enough, especially for her unknown mother; and she used sometimes to say to me—'Ah! Madeleine, it is so sorrow-

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ful never to have known my mother, either living or dead. I should have loved my mother so much, Madeleine!' But, my lady you are weeping!"

"Ah! it is because I sympathize with your orphan nursling, Madeleine. But go on—I think you said she was beautiful?"

"As fair as a lily, as blooming as a rosebud, and as graceful as a vine. She has heavenly blue eyes, and a halo of golden ringlets around her lovely face."

"And good? above all, is she good?"

"As an angel, lady!"

"Beautiful and good! thank Heaven for that!"

"Lady, you weep, you turn pale and red, and tremble and gasp for breath—what is all this?"

"Susan! Susan! tell her."

"Must I, lady?" asked the girl, coming up.

"Yes! yes!"

The sick woman raised on her elbow and bent forward eagerly.

Susan took her mistress's hand with the deepest respect and turning toward Madeleine, said—

"My lady is the mother of Etoile L'Orient, your nursling."

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed the quadroon, sinking back upon her pillow.

Then silence fell upon the three for a few minutes.

At length the lady said—

"Madeleine, the letter you spoke of must be written this evening; but first, do you feel quite equal to giving me a short, succinct history of all you know, in regard to my child?"

"Quite equal to it, my lady! And not only that, but so anxious to tell you, that if I did not do it, I should not sleep a wink to-night."

Estelle arose and arranged the pillows more comfortably

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order the head of her patient; ordered Susan to get some jelly from the basket she brought; fed the sick woman with a few spoonsful; made her swallow a half glass of lemonade; bathed her face and hands in perfumed ice water; and when she saw her perfectly refreshed, she sat down beside the bed, and said—

"Now, if you feel able, Madeleine, commence."

And the quadroon, beginning with the arrival of Madame L'Orient with the yearling baby at the Island, related the whole after history of the child, up to the time of the sudden death of Monsieur Henri De L'Ile, the guardianship of Mr. Luxmore over the heiress, and the emancipation and departure of herself—Madeleine and her son Frivole—from the Isle.

"And you have not heard from her since?"

"Oh yes, my lady! After Mr. Luxmore went to France, I received letters from the sweet creature almost every month. She spoke of having written two letters previous to that, but I had never received them!"

"And what sort of a man is this Mr. Luxmore, who is left the guardian of my child?"

"My lady, he is about thirty-five years of age, handsome, fair, accomplished, and seemingly amiable and upright—but——"

"Well, 'but' what?"

"Nothwithstanding all that, I have no confidence in Mr. Julius Luxmore!"

"Why?"

"I cannot tell you, indeed, my lady, for I do not know. Yet *he* perceived it, and for that reason banished me."

"May not your want of confidence have been unjust?"

"Possibly, my lady; yet a circumstance has come to my knowledge, which would seem to justify my instincts."

"And that circumstance?" inquired Estelle, bending eagerly forward.

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"In Mademoiselle Etoile's last letter to me, dated six weeks since, she tells me that she is to be united in marriage to Mr. Julius Luxmore, her guardian, for that such is his will."

"Oh, Heaven of Heavens! No, no! I shall not so lose my child! She is too young! She is but a babe! She cannot love this man of thirty-five!" exclaimed the lady, half rising in her strong excitement.

"I never said she loved him, Madame. Oh, in all affairs relating to love, courtship and marriage, she is as innocent as an infant."

"Then he *dare* not coerce her! Isolated and helpless, though she be, he *dare not* coerce her!"

"My lady, he not only dare not, but he *will* not. It is the *fortune*, and not the hand of this child that is the object of his desire, I feel sure; therefore, he will use no force that might afterward tend to invalidate his claim."

Then since she loves him not, and since he dare not compel her, I do not see how a marriage is to be brought about?"

"Ah my lady! I told you she was as innocent as the babe unborn of all knowledge relating to love and marriage. She does not know that love is necessary both to the good and happiness of marriage. She is ignorant but that matrimony is a mere arrangement of convenience. And she naturally takes her fate from her guardian, who is of course interested in securing her large fortune and her beautiful person to himself. And she, poor lamb, is even anxious that this union should take place, that she may leave the Island and go into the world. She sees the east and west shores of the main land, only under the strong lights of the rising and setting sun, and so believes that all glory and delight is in what she calls 'the beautiful world beyond!' It appears that her guardian has promised to bring her to this imaginary paradise, immediately after their marriage."

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"I see! I see the infamous motive under this! He would give her no freedom of choice, until she is irrevocably his own!"

"That is just what occurred to me, my lady."

"And when, does she say, that this atrocious marriage is to be attempted?"

"Soon after her guardian's return from France, for he has not yet come, or at least, I have not yet received notice of his arrival. And in fact I have not received a letter from Etoile for nearly two months!"

"I must save my child! I must go to her immediately."

"Oh yes, dear lady, *do!* But how will you prove to her your identity as her mother?"

"By nature first of all! *You* did not doubt me, although no blood of mine runs in your veins. Still less will *she* hesitate, who is altogether my own."

"But for the satisfaction of others, dear lady; though you and Etoile may be perfectly certain of your relationship, how will you prove to others that you are her mother, she your daughter, and so establish your right of authority over her?"

"Thus. By documents no doubt to be found in the Island Mansion, which will prove that Etoile is the child of Victoire L'Orient and his wife, Estelle Morelle. And by Susan here, and a thousand others, if needful, that I myself am that very Estelle Morelle."

"So far, so good."

"Now, tell me, how am I to reach this Island; for it is my intention to hire a nurse to take care of you, and to proceed at once in search of my child."

"Oh, thank you, my lady, you are all goodness; but do not stop to find me a nurse."

"I must do as I see fit in that respect, Madeleine; that is not the question now; but how I shall reach the Island."

"My lady, I cannot tell. For years past no one has

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arrived at the Island except Mr. Luxmore, and he came in his own schooner."

"Then tell me at least what is the position of this Island in the Bay?"

"I cannot tell you, exactly; but it is within two or three hours' sail of a point called Brande's Headland."

"Brande's Headland!"

"Yes, my lady! You know the place?"

"Somewhat."

"It was always my late master's favorite point of communication with the shore. I believe also that there is always a sail-boat at the place, under the charge of the negroes. And I think perhaps your quickest and surest way of reaching the Isle would be to go to the Headland and hire a boat from there."

"So I believe. I now know what to do. And now, Madeleine, for the letter that we must write."

The requisite materials were found in the drawer of the little stand, the top of which, when cleared, served as a writing-table.

"Dictate now, Madeleine, as you would have done had my relationship to your nursling never become known to you."

The quadroon looked surprised at this order; but with perfect confidence in her patroness she obeyed.

It was just such an affectionate letter of congratulation as any nurse might have written to her beloved child on her birth-day. And in the postscript was added, by the lady's wish, merely these words—

"*I have news of your mother!*"

"That is sufficient; we must not overwhelm the child; we must communicate only enough to prepare her for my coming," said Estelle.

After the letter was sealed and duly directed, it was given in charge of an honest lad, the son of a poor widow,

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living in the same house, who was called up to carry it to the post office

"And be sure, my boy, to inquire if there is a letter for Madeleine Rose," said the sick woman, as the lad left her side.

"It has been so long since I have heard from Etoile, that I think there *must* be a letter in the office," she added.

As there was much to do in a little time, the lady and her attendant arose to take leave.

"I shall endeavor to send you a nurse this evening, Madeleine. And if you should get a letter from Etoile, will you send the lad to No. 5 ——— Lane, and let me know?"

"Indeed I will, my lady."

They now took leave and departed.

On reaching the street door the overcast appearance of the western sky struck them.

"I am afraid there is going to be a dreadful storm, my lady. Look what a black cloud!" said Susan.

"Yes! we shall have a tempest. I knew, by the state of the atmosphere, that we must have one before long. And it is coming. But, Susan, we have a great deal to do, and storm or calm, we must do it this afternoon; for I propose to sail in the very first vessel that leaves this port for the Chesapeake, even though there should be one going to-morrow morning. So, in order to save time we must take a cab."

And as an empty carriage was just then passing, Susan stopped, and engaged it for the remainder of the afternoon.

When mistress and maid were seated within, the first order given was—

"To the Infirmary Intelligence Office."

"A drive of ten minutes brought them to the place, where Estelle was so fortunate as to engage a well-recommended, middle-aged woman, who, being paid in advance,

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agreed to go at once to the sick room of Madeleine. They next drove to the nearest upholsterer, and sent a new cot, mattress, and bedding for the accommodation of the nurse.

They then purchased all the day's newspapers, and gave the order—

"No. 5 ——— Lane."

And in half an hour they were at home.

They were no sooner in the little parlor than Susan struck a light, relieved her mistress of her outside garments, and carefully ensconced her in her easy chair. Then placing a lighted lamp and the pile of newspapers on the table beside her, she said—

"And now, my lady, while you look at the ship news, I will hurry into the kitchen and have your tea ready in a moment."

She hastened to the adjoining little back room, leaving her mistress opening the papers.

Estelle turned at once to the list of vessels "to sail," ran her eye eagerly down the column, and then exclaimed, reading aloud—

"For Baltimore, on the 17th of July, the fast-sailing brig Ocean Queen, Brande Master."

"It is my old friend Barbara, whom I desire, but dread to meet! Yet she could serve me in this cause better than another Shall I go with her? Let destiny decide! If I can find another vessel going to the Chesapeake to-morrow, or the next day, that is to say at or before her time of sailing, I will go by such an one. If I cannot, I will sail with Barbara; for I have said that I will certainly go by the first craft that leaves."

Then addressing herself again to the list, she went carefully down the column. And afterward she successively consulted the ship news in all the remaining papers, but without finding any other vessel that was to sail for the Chesapeake for days to come.

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"Indubitably I go with Barbara," concluded the lady, as she folded up and put away the last paper

Susan then opened the door and said—

"Supper is served, my lady."

Estelle went out into the little back room, and seated herself at the neat table. But her spirits were too much hurried to permit her to do justice to the fragrant tea and nicely-browned toast that Susan had prepared.

Susan scarcely observed that her cookery was slighted The storm that had been gathering all the afternoon was now about to burst upon the earth and sea, to the mortal peril of all, great and small, that floated upon the one or stood upon the other. And Susan was flying about, closing shutters, and letting down windows, for the better preservation of their own tiny homestead. Scarcely was the last fastening secured before there blazed forth a blinding flash of lightning, followed instantaneously by a deafening crash of thunder, that seemed to shake the whole heavens and earth into dissolution.

Susan, arrested half way across the floor, turned deadly pale, and grasped the nearest chair for support.

"Come into the parlor," said Estelle, rising from her almost untasted meal.

They immediately went into the front room; Estelle sat down in her easy chair; Susan, who was dreadfully afraid in storms, dropped down at her mistress's feet, and buried her face in her mistress's lap.

And then for six hours, there raged one of the most terrific tempests in the memory of the present generation. From seven, P. M., till one A. M., wind, hail, thunder and lightning, made night hideous with their strife.

Unprecedented desolation marked the progress of the storm on shore. Trees were twisted off at their trunks, or torn up by the roots; groves, gardens and growing crops were devastated. In the towns and cities, old buildings

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that had stood the storms of centuries, as well as new edifices in process of erection, were alike leveled to the ground. Creeks and rivers, swollen to enormous size, overran their banks, flooding the whole shore, and sweeping off vegetation, buildings, cattle, men, women and children. The sea arose in its awful might, and advanced upon the land, desolating many towns and villages along the coast.

Great as was the devastation of the storm upon the land, those who were competent to judge, previsied a far greater mischief to the ships at sea. And those who had relatives or friends afloat, waited in extreme anxiety to hear news of them.

The six dreadful hours were passed by Estelle and her attendant in prayer to Heaven for all those who were exposed to the horrors of the storm.

At one o'clock the phrenzy of the tempest began to subside as the passion of an infuriated madman might, in sullen howls, and sometimes returns of frantic violence. And by two o'clock, the thunder and lightning had ceased, the sky was marbled over with troops of black, dispersing clouds, like a disbanded army of storm fiends, and the moon shone out, clear, bright and benignant, as some fair angel speaking peace to the world.

Susan lifted her head from the lap of her mistress, where all this time it had lain, and arose from her kneeling posture.

Estelle also stood up and bade her attendant prepare for retiring. Evening prayers were said. And thanks were returned to Heaven for the calm that had succeeded the storm. Then, unsuspicious of the great damage that had been done by land and sea, the mistress and the maid cheerfully sought their beds.

Estelle slept in the front room over the parlor. Susan occupied the back room over the kitchen. The door of communication was always open between the chambers

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Thus Susan, whose mind had been too thoroughly excited by the events of the day, to admit the possibility of her composing herself to rest, knew also that her mistress did not sleep for an instant; but turned, and turned in her bed, and sometimes arose softly and paced the floor. Hoping that the lady would at length lie down and sleep, and fearing to confirm her wakefulness by addressing her, Susan refrained from speaking or moving until some time after daybreak.

Then, seeing that her mistress opened the blinds to admit the day-light, and proceeded to make her morning toilet, Susan quietly arose and passed into her room.

"My dear girl, go back to bed. I did not wish to disturb you so soon after your loss of rest. Go to sleep again," said Estelle, as soon as she perceived her attendant.

"As if I *could* sleep again! Dear lady of mine, *you* have not slept all night! no, not for an instant. Why?" inquired the girl, with affectionate solicitude.

Estelle turned and came up to her humble friend, laid her hand upon the girl's shoulder, and with her eyes, her lips, her whole eloquent countenance beaming with a tender gladness, said—

"My Susan, many, many nights in my life have you known me to lie awake, from eve to morn, from *sorrow*. But never, in the whole course of my existence, Susan, have I lost but this one night's rest from JOY! Oh, Susan, think of my not being able to sleep for joy! My Etoile! my own child, whom I have mourned for so many years as dead! To think that she lives! that I shall soon clasp her living form to my bosom! It grows upon me, this sense of joy, Susan! it overpowers me! Oh, pray Heaven, that I, who cannot sleep for gladness, may not become unable to reason because of ecstasy!"

"God bless you and preserve you, in joy as in sorrow my lady!" prayed her faithful attendant.

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Alas! short-lived joy!

Scarcely had the words of self-congratulation left the lips of the mistress, and been answered by those of fervent sympathy from the maid, ere the door-bell was rung.

Susan hastened her toilet, and, wondering who it could be who came so early in the morning, went down to open the door.

It was Jerry, the lad whom they had sent to the post-office on the preceding evening.

"Please ma'am, will you ask Mrs. Estel to come directly to Madeleine, who has got a letter to show you."

"A letter from whom?"

"She told me to say from the young lady on the Island."

"Good news, or bad?" asked Susan, breathlessly.

"She didn't tell me."

"Very well; run home as fast as you can, and tell Madeleine that my mistress will be with her immediately."

The lad obeyed, and Susan ran up-stairs to inform her mistress.

"You needn't tell me. I have heard all, Susan! Quick! my bonnet and gloves!" exclaimed Estelle, who with trembling fingers was fastening her black silk mantilla.

And in less than five minutes the mistress and maid set out for Madeleine's lodgings.

"I should have sent for you last night, but for the dreadful storm," said Madeleine, as the lady took a seat beside her bed.

"But the letter, Madeleine? the letter! What news? How is she?"

"Well, Madam, but——"

"But what? Speak!"

"It seems that another letter has miscarried, since she says that she wrote me about six weeks since, advising me of the fact of her guardian's return."

"He has returned!"

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"Yes, Madam—and—lady, it appears from her letter, dated ten days ago, that her guardian had gone to Baltimore to make preparations for their marriage, but was expected home yesterday, which was to have been their wedding-day."

"Oh, no, no, no! Great Heaven, no! It cannot be that this innocent girl should be left to fall a sacrifice to that creature's cupidity! Surely something has intervened to save her! The steamboats have brought us news of many vessels becalmed at sea, in the great stillness of the atmosphere that prevailed until the storm of last night. He may not yet have been able to reach the Island!" exclaimed Estelle, vehemently, catching at the merest possibilities, as the drowning catch at sea-weed.

"Or—he may never reach it. He may have been wrecked. Many vessels must have been lost in the tempest," suggested Madeleine.

"No, Heaven forbid! But the great calm that preceded the storm must have stopped him. In the tempest of last night, he had enough to do to save his vessel: he could have made no progress. This morning something may have happened to detain him. I shall sail to-morrow in the Ocean Queen, the first vessel that leaves this port, for the Chesapeake. I may yet be able to save my child."

"Heaven grant it, madam!"

"Read the letter now—nay, give it to me, if you have no objection."

Madeleine took the precious missive from under her pillow, and handed it to the lady.

Eagerly Estelle opened it.

Artless, affectionate, and full of enthusiasm, was this child's epistle. She wrote of her approaching marriage with the most innocent frankness, treating it as a necessary preliminary to her heart's greatest aspiration, to see "the beautiful world beyond." She continued by saying that in

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making the bridal tour, they should come first of all to New York, where they should take the steamer to Liverpool, and where also she should be so happy to rejoin her dear Maman Madeleine, whom she intended to take with her as her attendant to Europe. She concluded with the fondest expressions of attachment and the tenderest epithets of endearment.

"The unsophisticated girl! Oh, Heaven grant that I may be in time to save her!" prayed Estelle, as she folded the letter.

Meantime, Susan had been in consultation with the nurse who quickly prepared a cup of tea and a slice of toast for the lady, who had not as yet breakfasted.

The errand-boy, Jerry, was dispatched to call a carriage. While he was absent, both mistress and maid partook of some slight refreshment, and soon afterward entered the cab and drove down to the —— street wharf, off which lay the Ocean Queen at anchor.

CHAPTER XL.

MEETING WITH AN OLD FRIEND

"It gives me wonder great as my content,
To see you here before me."—*Shakespeare.*

THE brig lay some quarter of a mile off the shore. Susan hailed a skiff, which soon put herself and her mistress alongside the vessel.

Barbara Brande's deck, as usual, presented an animating scene of orderly industry. Edwy, as mate, had charge of the forecastle. Several men were aloft, at work upon the rigging. Others were at the hatches, getting freight into

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the hold. Barbara stood upon the quarter-deck, directing some men, who were lowering the long-boat to go on shore Upon observing a lady coming over the gangway, she quickly walked forward to welcome the visitor. Barbara was the same handsome Amazon; with the same erect and rounded form, the same stately head, firm features, great, strong, flashing black eyes and brilliant complexion, shaded by crisp, rippled bands of glittering, jet-black hair.

"Mrs. Estel! By all that is best, Mrs. Estel! Welcome, welcome, welcome! I am so overjoyed to see you!" she exclaimed, extending both hands to her visitor.

"Am I so little changed, Miss Brande, as to be recognized at once?" inquired the lady, with a slight smile, as she clasped the offered hands of the girl.

"Changed?" repeated Barbara, looking affectionately into her face. "Yes, my lady, you are changed somewhat —a little paler and thinner, which makes your eyes look still larger and darker by the contrast; that is all. I knew you, of course, at a glance. Ah, Susan, is that you? *You* are not changed the least in life. How are you? But come into the cabin where we can talk; for oh, my lady, I think that we must have a great deal to say to each other," exclaimed Barbara, addressing sometimes one and sometimes the other of her visitors, as she led the way into the cabin.

"First of all, Miss Brande, I wish to inquire if myself and maid can have berths here?" asked Estelle.

"Of course," replied Barbara, promptly, as she motioned her visitors to take seats upon the sofa, at the same time placing herself in a chair.

"Then consider them engaged at once."

"You are going to Baltimore or Washington?"

"To neither. We are going back to the Headland, unless you can engage to put me on shore upon East Island."

"East Island!"

"Yes; why are you astonished, Miss Brande?"

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"Because no one ever lands on East Island. It is, in fact, inaccessible at all points save one. Besides, the old man who owns it is as jealous as a Chinaman of the approach of strangers."

"But the old man has been dead nearly a twelvemonth."

"The old man dead!—and I never knew it!—though, in fact, everybody on the Island might die, and the rest of the world would know nothing about it. And so he is gone! Well, 'tis said that

> 'The angels weep, when a babe is born,
> And sing when an old man dies.'

But what has become of the pretty heiress, Etoile?" inquired Barbara, at heart wondering how it was that Mrs Estel should know any thing of the Isle and its inhabitants

"The young girl remains there under the charge of her guardian, Mr. Julius Luxmore."

Barbara heard! She heard this name pronounced without an exclamation, a start, or a change of color, betraying how terrible was the shock she had received—so perfect was the nervous system, and so admirable was the self-command of this noble girl.

There was scarcely a perceptible change in her voice, as she repeated—

"Mr. Julius Luxmore? You said that the young lady's guardian was Mr. Julius Luxmore?"

"Yes, Miss Brande."

"May you not be mistaken in the name, madam?"

"Impossible, Miss Brande. But why do you ask?"

"Why, I knew Monsieur Henri De L'Ile for many years, and never heard him mention such a person among his intimate acquaintances. Though it is true that Monsieur Henri, who never encouraged visitors to approach the Island, some years ago even discontinued his visits to the mainland; or else, changed his trade from our shore to the opposite

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one, so that, for the last five years, I have lost sight of Monsieur De L'Ile."

"And it was precisely for that length of time, only, that he had been acquainted with Mr. Luxmore."

"Then it is not strange that I should never have heard of that friendship," said Barbara, too calmly to betray how much she was impressed by this new coincidence.

"But, Miss Brande, I have made a discovery, which I wish to impart to you. But first, will you permit Susan to close the cabin?"

Barbara arose and secured the door, and returning, said:

"Now I am at your service, dear lady. Go on: I listen."

"Miss Brande, this man, this Julius Luxmore, has for five years past, fixed his avaricious eyes upon the fortune of his ward, and to secure that, has determined to take advantage of her innocence and inexperience, and, child as she is, to marry her. But, if it should not be too late, I have power, through the discovery that I have made, to prevent this sacrifice."

"You, my lady?" replied Barbara, who neither by look, tone, or gesture, revealed how deeply the iron entered her soul.

"Yes, I, Miss Brande! And hence my intended voyage to the Island. But I must tell you the momentous discovery that I have made. You may remember that, in relating my story, I informed you that after the birth of my little girl, I just saw her face fade away from my fainting eyes; and that after recovering from the alternate stupor and delirium of many weeks, upon inquiring for my child, I was told that she was dead and buried?"

"I remember, lady."

"*I was deceived.* My child was not dead. She had been secreted by her grandmother, Madame L'Orient, who after the transportation of Monsieur Victoire, to make her

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self acceptable to the childless Monsieur Henri, conveyed the infant to the Island."

"Oh, madam, what a discovery! To what providential circumstance were you indebted for it?" inquired Barbara, who, through all her own aching heart, sympathized with this deeply-wronged mother.

"To a providential meeting and conversation with her nurse, Madeleine, whom the jealousy and caution of Mr. Luxmore had banished from the Island," replied the lady, who thereupon commenced and gave a full and detailed account of the manner in which she had become acquainted with Madeleine, and the revelation which had been made her by the latter, concerning the infancy of Etoile, the death of Monsieur Henri, the guardianship of Mr. Luxmore, and the appointed marriage between the guardian and his ward.

And Barbara listened—no outward emotions revealing the inward storm that shook her great soul. That her betrothed—whom she had mourned as dead, these five years past, and to whose memory she had been more faithful than many widows to that of their husbands—should have been for this length of time, not dead, but deliberately false—false under circumstances that increased a thousand-fold the heinous enormity of his treachery—was a thought that convulsed her soul with anguish. But there existed a merciful possibility that this might not be *her* Julius Luxmore! True, the name was rare, the coincidences striking, the circumstantial evidence nearly overwhelming; but she had heard of innocent people being convicted upon much stronger proof; and she would suspend her judgment until her own eyes should convince her of his turpitude! But, until then, what a war in her bosom! Happily, with her regnant self-control, she let no sign of this inward tempest escape. She answered Estelle very calmly, saying—

"Yes, lady, you are right. If not too late, this unnatu-

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rai marriage must be stopped. And if not too late *now*, lest it should become so by another day's delay, we must lose no time. It was my intention to sail to-morrow morning for the Chesapeake. But if you wish, and if you will be ready, I will get up anchor and make sail for the Island at moonrise this evening."

"Oh! how generous you are! how heart and soul you enter into my interests, Miss Brande—dearest Barbara!"

"Ay, call me by my Christian name, I like that best," was all the answer the quiet, but half broken-hearted girl made.

Estelle and her maid then arose and took leave of Miss Brande, promising to be on board an hour before the time of sailing, in the evening.

For some moments after her friends had left the vessel, Barbara Brande remained standing, like one transfixed by sorrow and dismay. Then, suddenly starting, she exclaimed—

"But this is no time to think of my own trouble. I must bring *them* together!"

And she hastened down into her cabin, where she took a seat at her little table, drew writing materials before her, and indited the following brief letter—

Brig Ocean Queen,
New York Harbor, July, 184—.

My Lord:—We sail for the Chesapeake this evening. If you would hear of one for whom you have long searched, meet me at the Headland, where I shall wait for you.

B. B.

She sealed the letter and superscribed it—

'The Right Honorable, the Earl of Eagletower,
Washington, D. C.'

Then, calling Edwy, she bade him take the letter, and hasten with it ashore, to secure the next mail.

Meanwhile the skiff, still waiting alongside, conveyed

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Estelle and her maid to the wharf where they entered the cab and returned home to make hasty preparations for their voyage. They packed up a few articles of wearing apparel, closed up the house, called to take a hasty leave of Madeleine, drove down to the wharf, and by seven o'clock found themselves in the stern gallery of the Ocean Queen.

At eight o'clock, the full moon arose, a light breeze from the west sprang up, and under these favorable auspices the brig made sail.

"If this weather continues, we shall reach the Island in five days," said Barbara.

"Heaven grant that it may so," replied Estelle.

"Unlikely, as under the most favorable circumstances, it seems, I still have a deep prophetic feeling that I shall yet be able to save my child!"

"Heaven grant *that*, also," said Barbara.

"Amen," responded Estelle.

And then, as the friends sat in the stern gallery, watching the receding shores, or the moonlit sea, their thoughts reverted to by-gone days.

Estelle said—

"I do not see Willful! What have you done with my favorite?"

"Willful has been midshipman in the navy for three years past, dear lady; his ship is now daily expected home from the Mediterranean."

"I am glad to hear it," replied Estelle, and then after a short pause, she said—

"I am thinking of Joseph in Egypt, when he lifted up his voice, and said—'I am Joseph. Doth my father yet live?' Oh, Barbara, you know what I would ask! Do *my* parents yet live?"

"Lady, when I last heard of Sir Parke and Lady Morelle, some few months since, they were enjoying their usual health, and living in their customary state, at Hyde Hall."

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"Thank heaven!"

"But, Madam, is there no one else that you care to inquire for?"

"Yes! Tell me, Miss Brande, if you can, that *he* is well and happy. That he has forgotten poor Estelle, and all the sorrows she has occasioned him, and has found, somewhere, a bride to his mind?"

"Lady, is it possible that you never look into an English newspaper?"

"Never. If they fell in my way, I might not be able to refrain from searching them, any more than I can refrain from questioning you. But they have *not* come in my way, and I have abstained from seeking them. But tell me of *him.*"

"Lady, he has regularly corresponded with me, for the last five years. Each month he has written, asking me if I have heard news of *you.* And when I last heard of *Lord Montressor,*"—she said, laying a strong emphasis on the name—"he was resident minister at the court of———. Lady, both your parents and your lover have sought you over the earth, for five years past. Immediately after the decision of the Arches Court, which you might have seen——"

"Yes, I saw it by chance, in the Court Journal."

——"Your father and lover set out for the Headland, where they arrived just a month after you had left. I cannot describe to you their disappointment. It was deplorable! Since that they have used every means to discover your retreat. How vainly, you know."

"Miss Brande, I shall trust in you to keep my secret!"

"Dear lady, I really will not enter into any bonds of that sort. You must trust solely to Providence for your future. I think if you knew how rare a thing is constancy, in this world of ours, you would set more value upon that of the Earl—I mean Lord Montressor."

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Estelle made no reply to that, but turned the conversation into another channel.

They remained talking until ten o'clock, when Estelle retired to her state-room, and soon after to her berth, where, exhausted by the fatigue and excitement of the last two days, she soon fell into a deep sleep.

Alas! for the fair hopes with which this voyage commenced! The next day the weather changed, the wind shifted, and blew straight ahead for three days, during which the vessel beat about, making little or no progress down the Atlantic. And when at last the gale subsided, there ensued a dead calm, that lasted two weeks, during which the vessel lay like a log, burning under the fierce heat of the July sun. Barbara and her passengers were nearly in despair. But we must leave them in their dilemma, and borrowing the wings of imagination, precede them to the Island, to ascertain what, in the meantime, has been the fate of Estelle's child.

CHAPTER XLI.

A WAITING BRIDE.

"Wake, maiden, wake! the moments fly
Which yet that maiden name allow;
Wake, lady, wake! the hour is nigh
When One shall claim thy plighted vow."—*Scott.*

No band of hired minstrels sounding their reveille, aroused Etoile L'Orient on the morning of her birth-day and appointed bridal eve. But the matin songs of myriad birds that made the fair Isle their home, as usual awoke the maiden.

With no understanding of the dreadful, loveless, life-long bond, with which she was about to fetter her soul—but with

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an ecstatic recollection that upon this day, it was appointed she should leave the Isle for the unknown world beyond, the artless creature sprang from her couch, to greet the sun upon this her bridal morn.

She went first and threw open the window-shutters to look out.

It was a morning without cloud or mist, or breath of stirring air. Far eastward, across the still gray waters and beyond the silvery sanded flats of Accomac, the sun—like a king without his court—was rising in solitary grandeur; not a single courtier cloud attended his levee, or reflected his splendor. Every aspect of the earth, sea and sky, foreboded a still, close, hot day, to be followed by a night of storm.

Every solitary dweller with nature is by habit weather-wise. Etoile, the young recluse of the Island, could read the signs of the sky, and looking out, breathed a light sigh.

"The atmosphere is lifeless, though 'tis early morning; not a leaf stirs on the trees; scarcely a ripple curls on the waters; even the birds have already ceased their songs; and I—I can scarcely breathe this motionless air! But I will ask Moll about the weather, she knows the best."

And going to the bell-rope, the young girl rang for her attendant.

Old Moll and little Peggy entered.

"What sort of day is this going to be, Aunt Moll?"

"'Deed, Miss Etty, it gwine be like yisdy and day 'fore yisdy, on'y more so! 'Deed its wonderful hot an' close; not a bref of air more'n de whole yeth had de asthmetics! Marster send a little gus' or somefin to freshen the air a bit! Is yer gwine down to the crik?" said the old woman, as she busied herself with getting together her young lady's bathing-dress, shoes, cap, towels and so forth.

"Yes," Etoile said, "of course I am going down to the creek."

Old Timon always waited at the little maiden's solitary

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breakfast-table. This morning he made his appearance just as his young mistress took her seat at the board.

"What sort of weather are we going to have, Timon?" asked the child.

"Honey, dere's bound to be a change afore long," replied this philosopher, oracularly.

"What *sort* of a change, Timon?" inquired Etoile, a little impatiently.

"A *change*—dat all I kin say," responded the sable savan, growing more profoundly mysterious.

"Do you think that the packet will reach here this morning?"

"Yes, honey, dat is ef she kin git here! which you see 'pends 'pon circumferences b'yond our 'trol."

Finding that there was no satisfaction to be got from Timon, the youug lady arose and retired to her own parlor and endeavored to settle herself to her usual avocation. In vain! She could not confine her attention to the open book before her. She tried her painting, and then her music, with no better success. Finally, she arose and went to her aviary.

"Poor little captives! you are so like myself that I ought not to neglect you for an hour," she said, and calling her little hand-maid, Peggy, to her assistance, she opened all the windows of the aviary to let in more light if not more air. And then she busied herself until noon in cleaning out the cages, and supplying them with seed and water and fresh green boughs. The clock struck twelve while she was still at work.

"Noon! and the packet not here yet! Bring me the telescope, Peggy.

The little maid obeyed. And Etoile taking the instrument from her hand, went out upon the piazza, adjusted the glass, and took a sweeping survey of the Chesapeake. Up he Bay, in the direction whence she expected the packet

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with Mr. Luxmore, not a sail was to be seen. Down the Bay—very far down, midway between the two capes, lay, apparently becalmed, a vessel.

With a deep sigh, she lowered the telescope, laid it on the settee, and returned to her occupation in the aviary.

At dinner she again spoke to Timon.

"Two o'clock, uncle, and the packet not here!"

"How she gwine be here, chile, widout a bref of win' to blow her along?"

"Oh, I wish the wind would rise!"

"Hush, honey! you don't know what yer asking for!"

"Ah, but I am *so tired* of this place."

"You wants to leab we-dem mighty bad!"

"Oh, no! no! no! only for a little while! I could not desert the dear Isle, and you all who are on it, forever, because, after all, I love my Island and my people better than all else *living*. But I do not want to go and see the wonderful world. And even more than that, I want to see my dear lost mother's friends and hear about *her*. For you know, no one would ever tell me about my dear mother—where she lived, or if she lived at all!—or if she was dead, or where she was buried! So, you see, I am left altogether in doubt. And Mr. Luxmore has promised to take me, directly after we are married, back to my mother's friends. It is that which makes me so anxious to be gone! Oh, Heaven! that the wind would rise!"

Leaving the table, she called Peggy to bring her the telescope, and went up stairs to the attic, and then up the ladder to the little observatory terrace upon the apex of the roof between the two central chimneys. Adjusting the instrument, she looked far up the Bay. There was not a sail to be seen. She turned the glass down the Bay. There lay the schooner just within the Capes.

While watching her still white sails, she observed the ragged end of an inky cloud just above the horizon. At

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the same instant, a distant, deep, and hollow moan sounded over the sea, and like a prophetic sigh from nature, the first breath of the waking breeze touched her brow.

"Thank Heaven, the wind is rising," she said.

And lowering her telescope, she went below.

"Timon, the wind is getting up! the packet will be in!" she said exultingly to the old man, whom she found upon the piazza.

"Yes, honey; but dis win' come *up* de Bay dead ag'in any down packet."

"Why, so it is! I never thought of that," said Etoile, with a look of disappointment.

"But don't you git 'scouraged, honey! Now de win' up, it may shif', an' any win' short ob *harrycane* is better nor a dead calm."

Restlessly, impatiently, the girl walked about, looking first from one window and then from another. At last she said:

"Bring along the telescope, and go down to the beach with me, Timon. I want to watch."

And taking down her straw hat, she tied it on and led the way to the extreme south point of the Island, called The Shells.

This was the most desolate—or rather the *only* desolate portion of her insular domain. In low water, it exhibited several acres of rugged shoal, consisting of reefs beyond reefs of sand, shells, sea ore, and all the multifarious deposits of the waves. Here, after ebb tide, in the deep pools left in the hollows between the reefs, shell-fish were caught in abundance by the Island negroes. Now, the water was very low, and Etoile could easily step across the little pools in which she observed the crabs and manenosies struggling to escape.

"Give me the glass! There! stand and let me rest it upon your shoulder, good Timon, and I will see what I can

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see. That schooner is nearer. Her sails are filling with the breeze. She is bearing up," said Etoile, after she had taken sight. Then lowering the glass, and returning it to the keeping of Timon, she scanned the sky with her naked eye. Detached and ragged fragments of an inky cloud, sailed like an ill-omened fleet before the wind up the horizon.

"There will be a gust! I hope it will not be a serious one. What think you, father Timon?"

"'Deed, honey, you may 'pare for any thing, when you sees de debil's black rag-bag shook out in the sky dat way!" said Timon, ominously.

The wind blew higher—the fleet of clouds sailed up faster—the sea took on a darker shadow.

"Miss Etty, chile, I think how we done better go into the house," said the old negro, uneasily.

"Perhaps we had," said Etoile, turning. "But, father Timon, what is the matter with the birds?" she inquired, calling his attention to the great flocks of water-fowl screaming, that darted distractedly to and fro between the darkened heavens and the troubled sea, or dropped in sudden terror to the covert of some thicket on the Island. "What does ail the birds, father Timon?"

"*Dey* knows,—de dumb creatures do!" replied the old man, mysteriously.

"What do you mean, father Timon?"

"Ah! chile, you's young—you is! You nebber see such a tempes' in your life, as we-dem gwine to have to-night!"

"Oh, I hope not! Dear Heaven, I hope not!" exclaimed Etoile fervently, and the next moment she took heart of grace, and comforted herself with the reflection that old Timon was always at best a croaker.

The gale was now blowing so hard, that it was with difficulty she could keep her footing, and avoid being thrown forward upon her face

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As they neared the house, she saw old Moll and Peggy hastily closing blinds and letting down windows.

Turning her eyes over the grounds, she noticed the old men hurrying the frightened cattle into their places of shelter, while crowds of women and children were running toward the mansion house, as a place of greater safety from the impending storm.

Flocks of sea-fowl were seen settling on the Isle. Man and beast, alike, seemed impressed with the prophetic instinct, that the coming tempest would be one of unprecedented violence.

Old Moll opened the front door to admit her young mistress.

"Come in, chile! Lors a messy 'pon top o' me! Come in out'n the win'! It's enough to blow you 'way!" he said, taking the hand of the young girl, and drawing her within the door. Then noticing the crowd of women and children, increased now by the arrival of the old men from putting the cattle up, she angrily exclaimed:

"What all you-dem black niggers come a scrowdging in here for? Go 'long wid yer! You tink how ef de debbil want you to-night, Miss Etwil can save you? Go 'long wid you!"

"Oh, let them come in, poor souls! if they think they will feel any better here! We will all sit together in the large, front room, until the storm is past," said the gentle-hearted girl. And, as her sweet will was law, all her people entered with her, and found shelter in that spacious apartment opposite Etoile's parlor, which had once been Monsieur Henri's hall of state.

The negroes withdrew to the walls of the rooms.

"Find seats—find seats—you must not, after your long day's labor, remain standing," said their kind young mistress.

The old people sat down in chairs, at a humble distance

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from their little lady, and took the children upon their laps. The others seated themselves upon the carpet.

Etoile drew a chair to the centre-table, and reclined.

They were scarcely thus arranged, when a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a tremendous roll of thunder, startled every one to their feet.

"Marster, messy on us!" cried old Moll, crossing herself. "Oh, Miss Etwil, honey, let me light a bless' candle!"

"You must trust in the Lord, mother Moll."

"Yes, chile, so I does; but I'd feel heap easier in my mind, if there was a bless' candle light."

"Oh, yes, Miss Etwil! please, honey, let the bress candle be lit," pleaded the other servants.

There was no wisdom in arguing with terrified negroes in a storm.

"Light the candles, if you like," said the little lady.

Moll jumped to avail herself of the permission. She went to the fire-place, where, occupying the centre of the mantel-shelf, stood a plaster image of a saint, with a wax candle in each hand. Moll took one of these, drew a match and lighted it, and was just about to replace it in the hand of the image, when—

There fell—hurled down from heaven—a tremendous thunderbolt, striking and shattering the chimney, throwing Moll upon her face, extinguishing the candle, and stunning, into momentary insensibility, every person in the apartment.

Total darkness and silence followed the shock.

Etoile, who, in the swift instant of receiving the electric charge had believed herself to be annihilated, was the first to recover her senses and presence of mind. More slowly returned her powers of speech and motion. But all was total darkness and stillness around her. She listened.

Not a motion—not a breath—not a sound—save the falling of the rain, was heard.

"My Father! are they all killed?" she exclaimed. "Who

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is alive? Is there no one that can answer me?" she inquired and waited for the issue.

None spoke.

She arose, still quivering from the shock, and groped her way over prostrate forms to the mantlepiece, when she felt for the matches, and lighted the remaining candle. The illumination of the room showed her the forms of the prostrate negroes, slowly recovering, and amid muttered prayers and exclamations of dismay, picking themselves up.

No one was hurt.

Etoile stooped and took up the extinguished candle, lighted it, and placed it, with the other, in the hands of the image. The double light certainly made the large room look more cheerful, and revived the spirits of the appalled negroes.

"But see you," said their young mistress, "you must trust in God alone. For observe, even though Aunt Moll held the blessed candle in her hand, she was struck down by the shock of the thunderbolt, and the candle was extinguished."

"Lord forgive you, Miss Etwill, honey," replied the old woman. "It wur de bressed an' holy candle as saved all our lives. An' ef' I hadn'd had de sanctify candle lighted in my han' when I was struck, I done been stretch out here, a dead 'oman on de floor."

Etoile's blue eyes dilated at this strange but almost unanswerable argument, and before she found a reply, another blinding flash of lightning, followed by an appalling crash of thunder, and a dashing flood of rain, sent all the negroes upon their knees.

Etoile grew pale as death, not for herself, but for others.

"Oh, God have mercy! Oh, God guard the ships at sea!" she prayed, with clasped hands, and lifted eyes.

"An on we-dem, too, amen, amen," responded all around her.

And now in the intervals between the rolling, crushing,

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and rending peals of thunder, and in the pauses of the dashing floods of rain, and the howling blasts of wind, was heard another dread sound.

It came not—like the thunder, the rain, and the wind—in fitful and startling assaults.

It came at certain intervals—regular, monotonous, and inexorable as fate.

It was a slow succession of dull, heavy, tremendous shocks, at each of which the solid earth seemed to quake and shudder.

Each shock was nearer, harder, heavier than the last.

The negroes heard it in appalled silence.

Our young heroine listened to the unknown sound, and looked upon the panic-stricken faces of her people. Then she inquired with forced calmness—

"What is that noise, Timon?"

"Oh, Miss Etwill, honey, don't ax me! Say your prayers, chile, an' let's die like Christians."

"Oh, God, it is the SEA! The SEA is advancing upon the Island!" exclaimed Etoile, as the awful truth broke upon her consciousness.

Then followed weeping and wailing, and wild wringing of the hands among her servants.

Etoile, heroic by nature, and self-controlled by education, after her first exclamation, became composed. Her clear, strong, active intellect at once comprehended the circumstances.

"The house stands high, the walls are of solid masonry. The sea may enter and flood the lower chambers, but will not be likely to rise to the upper ones, and cannot sweep away the building," she said to herself.

But, meanwhile, the wild tumultuous waters thundered onward like a vast besieging army. Soon the strong walls shook under the cannonading of the waves.

The negroes howled in the very agony of terror.

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"Silence, and listen to me!" exclaimed the young heroine rising and lifting her hand to attract attention.

In an instant the lamentations ceased, and all looked up to her beautiful inspired face, as though it had been the face of an angel.

"To the attic chambers! Every one of you to the attic! There you will be quite safe."

But so benumbed were their faculties by fright, and so confused their senses—with the mingled, deafening, chaotic noises of rolling thunder, and howling wind, and falling trees, and, above all, of the dreadful roar of the waters that broke against the trembling walls and creaking doors and windows of the house,—that they seemed to have lost the power of motion.

"To the attic! to the attic, for your lives! Snatch up the children and fly!" exclaimed Etoile, just as a great sea, thundering, broke upon the walls, and bearing down the doors and windows, rushed roaring into the house.

They had had barely time to seize the children and run through the back door to the back staircase, up which they fled before the pursuing waves.

Etoile, who had lingered behind to see that none were left, must have been whelmed in the black rush of waters that soon filled the first floor, but for her power of swimming. So she reached the staircase, and clambered up.

Three flights of stairs brought her to the attic, where she found her terrified people gathered.

"We are safe! we are safe! Return thanks to God and set yourselves at rest," exclaimed their mistress, as she joined them.

"Oh, young missus, is you sure?" inquired one of the old women.

"Yes, the water has risen only to the fifth step on the first staircase—it is wonderful that it could rise so high, and nearly impossible that it should rise higher. Be all com-

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posed. Give thanks to God, who holds the sea in the hollow of his hands. Who says unto the wild waters, 'Thus far, no further shalt thou go; and here let thy proud waves be stayed.' The storm must be nearly expended. It is almost midnight. And midnight and noonday, like sunset and sunrise, are always crises in weather," said the young girl.

But nothing seemed to corroborate her comforting testimony. For in this lofty, bleak, exposed attic, the violence of the storm was fearfully apparent. Through the uncovered glass windows, the lightning blazed in a continuous and blinding glare. Over the near roof, the thunder broke in deafening crashes. Around the peaked gables, the wind raved, rifting off and rattling down the shingles. And through every chink and crevice the rain poured; while up from below, rose the roar of the multitudinous devouring waters.

It was a night of such fear, horror, and desolatian, as the oldest negro on that Island had never seen before.

At one o'clock, while the storm was still raging, Etoile crept down in the dark, to take observation of how high the waters might have risen in the house. Down two flights she went, and paused at the head of the third. It was pitch dark. She stopped and listened, and heard the muffled motion of the waters within the walls, but was unable, from the sound, to judge how near they might be to her feet.

"Never mind. I will hold by the bannisters and step cautiously, and when I wet my shoes, it will be time enough to stop," said the heroic girl, as she went down on her dark and dangerous exploration. She had descended to the turn in the staircase, and had not yet wet her feet, when by the red gleam of the wax-lights left burning high in the hands of the image on the marble shelf of the large room, she saw the dark pool of waters below. Now, it may be strange, but it is true, that this still, black, confined abyss of water

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in an unwonted place, filled her soul with more fear than the great waves of the open sea could have inspired, because mingling with this fear was a disgust and loathing which could make no part of the terrors of the great ocean. Nevertheless, she went down nearly to the dark water's edge, and by the red gleam of the candle-light upon the surface, she noticed that it had fallen to the third step and was steadily subsiding. Having ascertained this fact, she hastened back up-stairs to rejoice the hearts of her people with these glad tidings.

"The sea is receding. In an hour it will have retired from the house. *Now* will you return thanks to the Lord who has stayed the waves?" she exclaimed, as she joined her people.

"Oh! we do, we do, Miss Etwill, but hear to the thunder still!" responded old Moll on the part of the negroes.

The storm, however, had spent its worst fury.

The wind, like the waves, was subsiding.

The flashes of lightning were less vivid, and less frequent. The peals of thunder rolled off faint and far.

The rain fell softer.

After two o'clock the clouds began to break away, dispersed. And at three o'clock the same placid morn that had shone upon Estelle, lying awake in her small dwelling in the distant city, looked in now through the attic window, upon her fair child, Etoile, seated among her sable attendants.

As soon as the thunder and lightning had ceased, the negroes, a heavy-headed race, had one by one dropped asleep on the attic floor.

But not so could Etoile compose herself to slumber. The novelty and excitement of her position, suspense and anxiety concerning the fate of the vessels at sea, combined to banish sleep from her eyelids.

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Near morning she went to one of the front dormer windows, opened it and looked out.

The far-spent night was now almost as light as day. The full moon rode in the mid heavens. The first faint dawn of morning paled the east. A few rent and ragged black clouds hung about the horizon, only serving to make the gray sky look lighter by the contrast. The sea had receded from the centre of the Island, but still raged and boiled over two thirds of the lower portion. Many fragments of broken timber were tossed hither and thither upon the crests of the waves. At first Etoile naturally supposed these to be portions of the Island cabins carried away by the flood.

But the next instant, raising her eyes and looking out at sea, she saw, oh horror! what?

The bare hulk of a vessel, the masts and shrouds all gone, tossed about, the sport of the maddened sea!

And while her eyes were still spell bound to the awful spectacle—the wreck shuddered through all her frame, settled, and went down, and the waves closed over the spot where she had sunk!

With a terrible cry, Etoile fell upon her face. Neither her cry nor fall aroused any of the heavy-headed negroes, sleeping the deep sleep of exhaustion.

Not long the poor girl lay in her swoon; for when she recovered her senses it was early morning. At first stupefied, bewildered and confused, with a dull, aching, undefined consciousness of something painful lying heavy at her heart, she strove in vain for recollection. And then suddenly flashed back upon her mind the perfect memory of the night of storm, and the ship that sank in her sight.

She hastened to arouse her servants.

"Awake! awake! up! up! a ship has been cast away on our shoal! I saw her go down before my eyes!" she cried, shaking one and then another. In a few minutes all

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were on their feet, and eagerly questioning each other as to what has happened.

But Etoile rushed to the window and looked out. The sun was just rising.

CHAPTER XLII.

WHAT THE SEA GAVE TO ETOILE.

"A ruddy tinge of glowing bronze
Upon his face is set,
Closely around his temples cling
Thick locks of shining jet;
He loves to climb the tall mast-head
Or plunge in the rapid stream;
He dares to look on the thunder cloud
And laugh at the lightning's gleam."—*Eliza Cook.*

THE sun arose over a scene of wild devastation. The green and blooming Isle was laid waste. Rose trellises, fences, arbors, and even the cottage homes of the negroes had been swept off by the flood. Groves of old forest trees had been torn up or broken down. Orchards of young fruit-trees were uprooted and swept away. Growing crops were annihilated. The sea that had receded from the Isle, surged, boiled and plunged madly upon the beach. A wild, sullen, and chaotic sky overhung the scene. Black, torn and jagged clouds, looking as though by some violent concussion of the elements they had been shivered into fragments, still hung about the horizon. The receding winds and waves still moaned in fitful gusts. "'Our house is left unto us desolate,'" said old Moll, speaking in the solemn words of Scripture, as she looked forth upon this scene.

"But indeed I do not mind that! for a few months of patient labor and another spring will repair all the damage

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done to the Island. But for the lives lost! Oh, friends, for the lives lost upon that doomed vessel, and upon how many more—good Heaven!—that may have gone down in the storm of last night!" said Etoile, mournfully.

"Our cabins are all carried away," muttered one old woman disconsolately.

"Your cabins shall be rebuilt and refurnished. All your losses shall be repaired. But alas! for those who have perished. Who shall rebuild their house of life?" she added sorrowfully. Then solemnly replying to her own question, she said: "Even the Lord of life! He shall rebuild their house of life! He shall give them mansions in the sky."

Then, after a little pause, she suddenly exclaimed: "Come, friends, let us go down and learn the worst. And she led the way, followed by the whole troop.

The third and the second floor of the house were found uninjured. But the first floor that had been swept by the flood, was thoroughly saturated with wet, and covered with a thick deposit of sand. The water-mark upon the walls showed that the sea had risen to the height of four feet in the rooms. All the lighter articles of furniture, such as chairs, footstools, etc., had been floated off. Other things remained uninjured.

They quickly opened all the doors and windows, to let the drying air pass through, and then they went forth from the house.

So rapidly had the sea advanced and receded, that the ground was not wet many inches deep. And they were enabled to pass, if not dry-shod, yet without wading, down to the beach, called The Shells.

Here was a wild scene! The higher sites of the shoals were littered with fragments of the wreck—broken spars, planks, casks, coops, etc. Further down the stormy sea still leaped, plunged, and broke upon the shore. While

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carefully picking her way among the multifarious fragments of the wreck, and springing over the surging pools, from rift to rift, Etoile suddenly paused and shrieked.

At her feet, among broken boxes, staved barrels, and tangled ropes,—bound with sea-weed, and half buried in sand, lay the body of a young man!

In an instant, Etoile was kneeling by his side, sweeping the sand and sea-weed from his face and form, and eagerly searching for some sign of life.

"Oh, come Moll! come Timon! come all of you and tell me! Is he dead? Is he dead?"

With an interest almost as intense as though the stranger had been some near friend or relative, she cleared his face from obstruction, loosened his cravat, and sought to raise his head.

But at that moment a spasm of pain convulsed his face and a tremulous moan escaped his lips. "Oh! he lives! the poor youth lives!" she exclaimed, rising and addressing the old negroes, whose slow steps had now brought them to the spot.

"Peggy! you and Chloe run, and bring down hither the light wicker settee from the hall, and spread two soft quilts upon it, girls. He must be laid upon that and carried up to the house. Timon! as soon as ever the sea subsides sufficiently to permit it, you must take the cutter, and run across to Heathville, to bring Doctor Crampton here. He is very much hurt, I fear! Oh girls, make haste! It is so dreadful for a bruised or wounded man to lie here on these rugged rifts!" she exclaimed, giving all her orders with a clearness and promptitude worthy of an older head.

As soon as it was possible to accomplish the task, the young negro maids returned, bringing the settee and soft quilts, which were folded and laid upon it.

'Now raise him tenderly, tenderly. Timon, help them Softly—do not jar his form. Ah! he moans! you hurt him

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shoulders, Timon! Be very careful. Now ease him down on the settee—so—there," she said, hovering with compassionate interest around the wounded man, while her troop of attendants looked on stupidly, or lent their aid only at her command. In truth, the poor creatures had not yet recovered from the panic of the storm.

"Now, Peggy and Chloe, take the head, and, Anne and Jane, go to the feet, and so go on, slowly to the house. Be careful! do not stumble! The least roughness of motion must be so painful to a wounded man. Aunt Moll, you and Aunt Patsy, hurry on to the house, and prepare your old master's chamber and bed for this youth," said Etoile, anxiously heedful of the welfare of the human waif thus cast upon her care.

She was promptly obeyed in every particular. And while the old negro men remained upon the shoals, searching with the instinct of natural wreckers, for spoils among the fragments, the old women, with a kinder impulse, hastened as fast as age and the rough way would allow, to prepare for the comfort of this survivor of the wreck. The young maids bore their burden gently on; and Etoile walked by the side of the settee, anxiously watching the pale, haggard, but handsome face of the sufferer.

Very carefully he was carried into the house, and up into the chamber of the late Monsieur Henri.

Very tenderly, then, the two old women changed his clothes, and laid him on the bed, covering him with a light, soft, white counterpane. When this was done, they called their young mistress, who came in with a small crystal flask of brandy, and a little glass.

"I have been looking in a medical book. It says that brandy must be given. Lift his head gently, Moll, while I pour a little into his lips," she said, approaching the bed.

The woman complied; but the lips, or rather the teeth of

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the patient were so firmly closed, that she could not force a drop through.

"Moll, I shall have to bleed him!" she said, almost in tears.

"Bleed! you! Miss Etoile? You do such a thing?" exclaimed old Moll in dismay.

"Yes! the book says in such a case as this, it must be done. There is no one here to do it but me. I know how it should be done, for I have often seen my dear uncle do it, in cases of necessity. Oh, I feel it is dreadful. It makes my blood run cold to think of it; but sooner than see a fellow-creature die, you know, why, even I must nerve myself to use a lancet."

And, without further ado, the young heroine prepared bandages and bowl, selected from her late uncle's case of instruments a proper lancet; and then, having stripped the arm to the shoulder, and tied a handkerchief tightly around it above the elbow, until the vein was erected, she took the blade between her finger and thumb, and with a firm hand proceeded to make the incision. It is true, that her sweet young face was pale as marble, and her lips firmly compressed, as she watched the thick and crimson stream of life curl slowly over the white arm; but her courage was repaid when, presently, she saw the rigor of the patient's form and face relax, and his bosom rise and fall in a long, deep, soft breath.

"Thank Heaven! Oh, thank Heaven!" she said, as she unbound the tight ligature to let the tide of life flow back, and carefully bandaged the arm.

"I thank you, fair and gentle lady," she heard a faint voice murmur, and looking up, as she replaced the arm, she saw the dark eyes of her patient opened, and regarding her with an expression of mingled astonishment and gratitude.

She beckoned her old servant to take away the sangui-

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nary evidences of her late work, and then stooping, inquired softly—

"Are you hurt much?"

"I think not, young lady."

"Try to make a very deep breath,—so, there,—does it hurt you to breathe thus?"

"Not in the least, my kind nurse."

"Then that proves that you have received no injury!"

"Ay! thank Heaven, I have received no inward hurt."

"Now move your limbs. Can you move them freely and without pain?"

"Yes, young lady."

"It is certain, then, that they are not broken nor strained."

"Ay! thank Heaven for that, also," said the patient smiling.

"Forgive me, if I seem intrusive; but I am the only doctor that is at hand, just now. So, for your own sake, young gentleman, you will be so good as not to mock when I question you," said the young girl, with the mild majesty that, on occasions, she could assume.

"I am most indebted to your compassion, my fair physician. I am blessed beyond my merits in falling into your hands. Did my smile offend you? Ah, young lady! it was the smile of one not fully come to his senses! Did you know how little cause I have to smile, you would pity, even more than you condemn."

"I condemn not! I pity from my deepest heart. But think of yourself, and of getting better. You have friends who love you, and for whose sake you must strive quickly to recover. Now then! move your arms, please."

The patient obeyed, but groaned deeply with the effort.

"One of your arms is hurt?"

"I think it is broken above the elbow."

"Oh!"

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It was a sudden catching of the breath, so full of acute, sympathetic pain, that the sufferer looked up in the pale face of his young nurse, wondering that this sensitive creature could be the same girl who, ten minutes before, had nerved her gentle heart to use the lancet.

But even while he wondered, she was gone from the room.

In two minutes she was back again, with Moll bringing a little pail and some napkins.

"My name, lady, is Willful Brande, midshipman in the United States' service," said the youth, who thought the time had come when politeness required him to announce himself.

"Oh! you are the Brande of the Headland. And, indeed, I saw a resemblance to Miss Barbara Brande," said Etoile smiling.

"She is my only sister."

"I saw her only once; but I liked her very much; I am glad if I can be of service to her brother, for her sake," said the young girl.

"And not for his own?" was upon the lips of the youth to ask; but respect and delicacy restrained the question.

"I thank you on the part of my sister as well as of myself, young lady," he answered.

"*My* name is Etoile L'Orient," replied the maiden, blushing, she knew not why, under the eloquent look of gratitude he had raised to her face.

"I shall never forget that name in my prayers, sweet lady," said the youth.

And now with slightly tremulous fingers, having confined the last bandage around the wounded arm, she directed Moll to take her place beside the sick bed, and went out to prepare, with her own careful little hands, a delicate repast for the invalid.

It was noon before the sea had sufficiently subsided to

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make it safe for a boat to be sent to the mainland. And thus it was night before old Dr. Crampton arrived. He was shown immediately to the room of the patient. Willful's hurt was a simple fracture, and the bone was easily set. The old physician praised the skill of the young nurse, but bade her go now and take care of herself.

As it was so late the doctor remained through the night, and until after breakfast the next morning. Then, while the boat was being prepared to take him to the main land, he paid, in company with his young hostess, a final visit to his patient, whom he found clear of febrile symptoms, and getting on very well.

And it was now that, with the physician seated on one side of the bed, and the young mistress of the house on the other, Willful Brande spoke of the circumstances of his shipwreck.

He informed his hearers that he had lately returned from the Mediterranean in the United States sloop-of-war Yorktown, now lying at the Norfolk Navy-yard; that he had left his ship and taken passage on board the schooner Nautilus from Norfolk for Baltimore, where he was going to join his sister, who expected to sail from New York to meet him there by a certain date; but that in the storm of the preceding evening the doomed vessel had been, as they knew, wrecked.

"Were none but yourself saved?" inquired Etoile, mournfully.

"Young lady, I think it likely *all* were saved! I will tell you. As soon as it was seen that the vessel must go down, when it was known that the water was rushing into the hold faster than two men at the pumps could pump it out, the crew took to the boats. The captain, the mate, and myself remained the last upon the wreck. When we saw every one else in safety we prepared to follow them But the boats were already full, and when those on board

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saw us about to enter, a question arose among them, as to whether they could bear the additional burden. It was decided that they should not risk the trial. And so they cut the ropes and deserted us. We were not willing, you may judge, to be thus left to death. We threw off our coats in an instant, and plunged into the sea to swim to the boats. It seemed our only chance. The captain and the mate, I hope, reached them in safety. For myself, I must have been struck by a portion of the wreck and stunned, for from the instant of my plunge I remember nothing more until I found myself on your hospitable Island, where I suppose a friendly wave, immediately after my fall, cast me."

"Ah! it was base in the crew and passengers to desert you and the brave officers. Still, I feel very much relieved to hear that the shipwreck was not near so disastrous as I had feared," said Etoile, with a sigh of satisfaction.

The boat was now reported ready, and the physician arose to take his leave. He declared his patient doing very well, left a few simple directions for his treatment, promised to call the next day, and so departed.

Willful Brande was ordered to lie quietly in bed for another day and night, to partake of only light food and cooling drinks, but was permitted to read or converse for pastime.

Now that it was ascertained that the patient was entirely free from danger of death, Etoile appointed Moll and Timon to wait upon him, while she, with an instinct of delicacy, absented herself from the sick room, or visited it only at stated times. But though absent, she occupied herself diligently in the service of the invalid, and provided for all his wants.

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CHAPTER XLIII.

LOVE.

"Love is the gift which God hath given
To man alone beneath the heaven;
It is not fantasy's wild fire,
Whose wishes, granted, soon expire:
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
For heaven, as for earth, can bind."—*Scott.*

THE house was restored to its usual condition, and the grounds, as nearly as possible, cleared from the vestiges of the late devastation; so that the surroundings of the young heiress were once more, upon the whole, orderly and pleasant. She returned to her usual employments, or occupied herself with the care of her invalid guest. And with hope mixed with fear, she hourly expected the arrival of her guardian's packet.

Willful Brande, lying on his sick couch and missing his beautiful hostess from the room, gave himself up to wonder and speculation. His position seemed to him like that of one in a dream or in a fairy tale—cast away on a charming island, and cared for by a lovely maiden, who seemed its only white inhabitant, and, youthful as she was, "Monarch of all 'she' surveyed."

He had certainly heard of L'Orient Isle, and of the good old man who ruled it; though it was as a memory of his childhood that the story now recurred. But who, then, was this angelic girl, who seemed its queen? She knew the Headland, and had once seen his sister! Willful at last remembered! She must be the child of whom he had once

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heard Barbara speak, and who was now grown to womanhood. But how was it that she was left alone? Had she neither parent nor guardian, or had her guardian deserted his post? What *was* the meaning of her extraordinary position? However Willful might speculate upon these questions, one thing was certain, that the bright and beautiful young face that, like an angel of healing, had beamed over his couch of pain, charming away the fever and distress, had left an impression on his youthful heart, never to be erased.

"I have saved my life, but I have lost my peace," said the poor youth, tossing about on his couch of uneasiness. "Yes, life is saved, but peace is lost; for whatever she be, this rare beauty, this young queen, is not for Willful Brande, the poor midshipman! I must get up and get away from the domains of this maiden Dido."

To get up was possible; but to get away at will was quite another matter. Vessels came not every day to the Isle, at the bidding of those who longed to get off.

While Willful was wondering, speculating, and planning in his room above, his young hostess was hospitably engaged in preparing for his reception below. She had her own charming boudoir set in festive order; fresh flowers put in all the vases; the windows opening upon the flower-garden hoisted; the communicating doors between the boudoir and the conservatory on the right, and the aviary on the left, opened, so that the songs of birds and the fragrance of flowers were wafted through; and lastly, a luxurious chair wheeled beside a table, upon which stood a vase of rich exotics and a selection of attractive books. She sat in the pleasant window seat, with her embroidery-frame in her hand, and attended by her woman Moll and her maid Peggy, upon the morning when Willful Brande, still very pale, and wearing his arm in a sling, was shown in by old Timon.

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Etoile at once arose, held out her hand to welcome him, and begged him to take the chair by the table.

Timon immediately brought him a glass of wine and a cracker, which his young hostess, in her character of deputy doctor, commanded him to swallow.

Willful Brande felt at once flattered and embarrassed by these friendly attentions, which, by the way, the high-toned and fine-spirited young islander would have lavished upon any venerable cripple with as much pleasure as upon this handsome youth.

When he had obeyed her, and swallowed the wine, and the little cut-glass service had been taken away, Etoile resumed her pleasant seat in the window, her two maids, Moll and Peggy, stood dutifully near her, engaged in knitting, and her old footman Timon waited in the hall without. More and more did the position and circumstances of this young creature impress Willful Brande as resembling the state of some petty old world princess—even in the dignified ease and self-possession with which she did the honors of her house.

An hour passed in pleasant conversation, during which Willful Brande incidentally learned that the young heiress had a guardian who was now temporarily absent. But he did not learn that guardian's name, far less the cause of his voyage from home, or his contemplated marriage with his ward.

Willful Brande felt that the more he saw of the beautiful Etoile, the more irrecoverably his heart became involved, and that the longer he should remain by her side, the more terrible would be the wrench by which he should have to tear himself away. And his resolution to escape became confirmed. Turning to his young hostess with a smile, he deferentially inquired what might be the means of leaving the Island for the nearest port.

"We have nothing but little sail-boats that take on

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messengers to and fro, between the main land and the Isle. Any one here who wishes to go further, is obliged to hail some passing packet to take them off," replied the young girl.

"But these packets pass frequently?"

"No, sir, not very frequently within hailing distance; not more than once a week."

The look of disappointment on the face of Willful appealed to the maiden's sympathies.

"I am truly sorry, Mr. Brande," she said, "that you should be detained here against your pleasure and convenience; but we will do all that we can to make your sojourn with us as little tedious to yourself as the circumstances will permit. The house and servants are quite at your disposal. So, also, are the horses and the boats, when you can avail yourself of them. Here are books and musical instruments, pray consider them your own."

"I am grateful from the depths of my soul for your kindness, young lady; but—I ought to be away," said Willful, with a profound sigh, which she understood to be one of regret at his own enforced stay. Believing this, she replied—

"I know, of course, how tedious to one accustomed to the world, must be life on this lonely Island."

"Tedious! good heaven! yes, it is as tedious as sipping, drop by drop, some exquisite draught that one knows must finally deprive him of reason!" thought Willful, bitterly.

But she was regarding him compassionately with her clear blue eyes, and, seeing him still overcast, she added—

"You will not have to remain long in this solitude. Every day, indeed, every hour. I expect my guardian's vessel. He will bring friends with him, and then you will have company and merry-making, which will help to enliven the scene for you. And as my guardian's packet is a chartered one, she will remain over night to take us to Baltimore,

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whence we travel by land to New York. And as your bourne is also Baltimore, we shall be happy to have you along with us. So cheer up, wayfarer, for you shall soon be with your own."

"You are kinder than the kindest, as well as fairer than the fairest, young lady, and it is not anxiety to get away, so much as it is the necessity of going that so disturbs me."

"Is the necessity so imminent?"

"Yes!" exclaimed Willful, in a deep, agitated voice, that caused her to look up in surprise to his face to find his eyes fixed upon her with an expression of warm admiration. But with the air of a detected culprit Willful hastily dropped his glance and blushed to the very edges of his hair.

Etoile compassionated without understanding the occasion of his disturbance, and addressed herself more zealously to the hospitable task of entertainiug her guest.

"Do you like music, Mr. Brande?"

"Excessively, if one can be said to like any good thing excessively."

"What instrument do you prefer? Look around, here is a pianoforte, a harp, guitar and lute. Name your choice."

"I like the instrument of God's workmanship, 'the human *voice* divine,'" said Willful significantly.

"Then the guitar is the best accompaniment for that," she replied, and taking the instrument from the ready hands of her maid, who had hastened to present it, she tuned the strings and commenced—no silly love ditty such as make up nine-tenths of the sum of current musical literature—but Samuel Lever's beautiful song, "My Mother Dear"—then first published. Etoile sung with a self-forgetfulness, a passion, and a pathos seldom equaled. As the last words died on the ear, and the tones of the singer's voice trembled

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into silence, Willful dashed a tear from his fine, dark eye, and said—

"It is a beautiful song."

"No—I don't know that it is beautiful; but it is my favorite," replied Etoile, in a tone of voice that still quivered with emotion.

"You loved your mother very much," said Willful, gently.

"Say—I *love* her 'very much'—above all human creatures, and only less than the Creator. And yet I never set my orphaned eyes upon my mother's face; but that is no reason why I may not remember her in my song and in my prayers."

"You never saw your mother, and yet you love her so!" exclaimed Willful in a thrilling voice.

"Ah, Mr. Brande! The sweet poet who wrote the sweetest song of home was all his life a homeless wayfarer throughout the world! So I, who never saw the face of my mother, love best the songs that speak of a mother's love. In all my life I heard but two or three words about her. It was in my childhood, and by chance, that I heard my grandmother speak of her to my uncle. Then I only learned that she was a young thing, scarcely so old as I am now, when her proud English relations carried her off, and I was left. Then, I do not know when I received the impression, but I always had the idea that my mother had very dark eyes and black hair, and that with all perhaps *I* resembled her. And so what do you think I did this summer?"

Willful smiled and shook his head; he could not answer.

"Why, out of her supposed likeness to myself, and out of her fancied dark hair and eyes, I painted an imaginary picture of my mother. See!" said Etoile, drawing the locket from her bosom and revealing the miniature to her companion.

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Willful took it, looked upon it, and started,—a tide of emotion swept through his frame.

It was the counterfeit resemblance of Estelle herself. He knew the history of the beautiful English lady who had been his sister's tenant. A crowd of coincidences rushed upon his memory and confirmed the suspicions that had flashed into his mind. But discretion held him, as yet, silent upon the subject of this possible discovery.

He raised his eyes to the face of the young girl.

"You say, Miss L'Orient, that this is only a fancy sketch?"

"Oh, no! not exactly so. It is painted from a strong impression on my mind. The outward expression of an inward belief."

"You *must*, in your unconscious infancy, have seen some face or portrait that made this impression upon your mind, even though you may have forgotten the circumstance."

"No! I think not—one cannot be sure; but why do you imagine such a thing?"

"Why," said Willful, evasively, "such *impressions* are usually unconscious recollections."

Feeling now that she had said perhaps too much of her own affairs, Etoile became silent. And Willful formed the secret determination to say nothing of the discovery he had made, until he should first consult his sister Barbara.

Three more days passed, and yet no news of the expected packet. And now to the stormy weather had succeeded a calm so profound as to leave no reasonable hope of soon seeing a sail.

Etoile exerted herself, all but too successfully, to console her guest for his "unwilling" detention. She introduced him to her birds, to her exotics, to all her best books,—she rambled with him over the Island, showing him all her favorite haunts; she sailed with him around the shore, and challenged him, as soon as his arm should get well, to a

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gallop around the race-course. And despite her anxiety to hear of or see her guardian, never had Etoile been so gay, so buoyant and so happy, as now that she enjoyed for the first time the society of a companion near her own age.

Day by day the acquaintance between the youth and maiden thus strangely thrown together, thus isolated from all the world and dependent solely upon each other for conversation and amusement, progressed toward friendship on one side, and passionate love on the other.

Day by day, when walking by her side; glancing stealthily at her beautiful face; listening to her sweet voice; feeling the fascination of her gentle manners—Willful Brande felt his honorable resolution of silence giving way. Still, as yet, he steadfastly restrained himself.

"I am not her equal in wealth and station. I will not take advantage of my present position to breathe one word of love in her defenseless young ear—no, not if my heart were to break!" said Willful to himself. But each succeeding day he found it harder to keep this resolution.

As for Etoile, she felt her innocent affections so drawn out by the youth who had been cast upon her Isle, and who was now her daily associate, that she began to dread the coming of the hour that should take him from her sight. And this was all natural, probable, inevitable! Besides her old uncle and her middle-aged guardian, Willful Brande was the only white man she had ever seen. Willful was young, amiable and eminently handsome, his manly beauty of form and features were enhanced by a frank, ardent and intellectual expression of countenance that ever won the confidence, esteem and friendship of all appreciating persons among whom he might be thrown.

And Etoile's innocent regard for her guest was testified in a thousand graceful kindnesses, each of which nearly threw her young lover off his guard and cast him at her feet.

But Willful Brande was the very soul of honor.

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"I must govern my feelings! I must not abuse hospitality! I must wait until her guardian shall return and she shall be fully under his protection, and then, perhaps!"—he exclaimed, giving wings to his youthful imagination. Meanwhile he no longer desired to escape from the Island; and for Etoile, as I said, she dreaded the hour of his departure.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE ATTEMPTED FLIGHT OF ETOILE.

"——— Quick, boatman, do not tarry,
And I'll give you a silver pound
To row us o'er the ferry."—*Campbell.*

ONE afternoon the youth and maiden were seated on the rude bench down on the beach, near the usual landing, watching the almost motionless surface of the water.

"Do you think that this calm can continue long, Mr. Brande?" inquired Etoile.

"I suppose not—though it may break up in another storm," replied Willful, gravely.

"Now, may the Lord in his mercy forbid!" exclaimed Etoile, fervently clasping her hands.

"So pray I! I never see a storm arise, without a sickening of the soul,—not for dread of what is coming, but in memory of what has gone! The sea has been very fatal to my race, Miss L'Orient!"

"Ah! has it been so?"—murmured the maiden, raising her eyes, full of sympathy, to his face. "I hope it was only vessels and cargoes, and not any near relative or dear friend that you lost?"

"My father, my two elder brothers, and my brother-in-law,

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all went down together in their lost vessels," said the young man, sorrowfully.

"Ah, what a calamity! I can deeply feel for you, Mr. Brande," she said in a voice tremulous with emotion, as she lifted her tearful, blue eyes again to his troubled face—"I can deeply feel with you, for I, too, have been a sufferer by the sea!"

"You are all sympathy and benevolence, dear young lady! And *you* a sufferer by the sea? I grieve to hear that. But I hope you have not suffered so deeply as myself?"

"I lost my father and my grandmother. But it is true that I did not feel the loss so deeply as I ought to have done, perhaps, for I had never seen my father, and had lost sight of my grandmother for years before they died."

Willful recollected now, that Monsieur and Madame L'Orient had been lost on the Mercury. He scarcely knew what reply to make to the earnest-hearted girl beside him. He knew perfectly well that the loss of her father was anything but a misfortune to her, still it would never do to tell her so, nor yet would it be honest to express a condolence, not felt, upon this subject. He contented himself with respectfully pressing her hand, and saying—

"Yes—I remember now—they were passengers on the same vessel, the Mercury, in which my father, my brothers, and my poor sister's betrothed, Julius Luxmore, went down."

"JULIUS LUXMORE!" exclaimed the maiden, in amazement.

"Yes, young lady! why should that name cast you in such a state of consternation? I beg your pardon."

"Why Julius Luxmore was not lost! he was saved!"

"Good heaven! I had even heard such a rumor; but never believed it! and never breathed it to Barbara!" thought Willful to himself. Then aloud he inquired—

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"Will you forgive the question and tell me—are you certain of the truth of that which you have just announced, young lady?"

"Assuredly! Mr. Luxmore was saved from the wreck of the Mercury. He brought us the news of the death of my father and grandmother. He brought us also such of my father's effects as were picked up on the sand-bank. And above all, he brought a will which constituted him guardian of my father's heiress."

"Yourself?"

"Certainly! And from that time to this, excepting the three winter months of last year, Mr. Luxmore has lived exclusively with us."

"Great Heaven! what perfidy!" exclaimed Willful Brande, in his heart; but from respect to his young hostess, his lips were silent.

She continued—

"Since the decease of my dear uncle, Mr. Luxmore has been my sole guardian and protector, as he will soon be my ——" She started, blushed, reflected an instant and then in a low and thrilling voice inquired—

"What was that you said about Mr. Luxmore being the betrothed husband of your sister?"

"My honored young hostess, I spoke indiscreetly; pray pardon me," said Willful, in a troubled tone.

"Mr. Brande, do *you* pardon my persistence and tell me, in plain terms, whether or not, Julius Luxmore was affianced to your sister."

"My dearest Miss L'Orient, Mr. Luxmore is your legal guardian. Let us talk no more of him."

"Mr. Brande! I have the most important, the most vital interest in the question that I have put to you—I do beseech you answer it."

"Young lady,——" began Willful, in a voice of distress that was quickly interrupted by Etoile, who clasping her

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hands and raising her eyes in the earnestness of her entreaty, said—

"Mr. Brande, I must tell you all! Mr. Luxmore, my guardian, has taught me to believe that I am his destined bride; and he has promised me that when we are married, and not until then, he will take me into the world and present me to my dear mother's relations. Now, not to see that world—nor even to possess ten thousand such worlds, would I marry a man who has broken faith with another woman, for it would be a fearful sin, invoking the judgment of God upon my head! Therefore, if this man, who seeks my hand, was the betrothed of Barbara Brande, tell me and save me from the sin and sorrow of wedding him?"

Willful Brande was agitated. His strong impulse was to say to her at once—

"Yes—the base traitor! he broke faith with Barbara! he deceived and deserted her at her utmost need;" but a high, chivalrous magnanimity held him silent. He said to himself—"It may be that she loves him; and that he may yet grow worthy of such love—if so, though my heart should burst, I will refrain from saying any thing to destroy her confidence in him."

"You do not speak, Mr. Brande! Oh, answer me!"

"Miss L'Orient!" exclaimed the young man taking her hand, and speaking with the deepest respect—"forgive the question that I am about to ask you and answer it, as true soul to soul: you say that you are contracted in marriage to your guardian—do you love him?"

"Indeed, I do not know! I *tried* to like him, because I always thought it was my duty to do so; but if I find he has been a recreant to another love, I am sure I shall utterly cease to esteem him. Therefore—I adjure you by your honor to inform me—was Julius Luxmore the betrothed husband of Barbara Brande?"

"Miss L'Orient, thus adjured, I have no choice but to

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reply—Yes! Julius Luxmore *was* the betrothed husband of Barbara Brande, with whom, without just cause, he broke faith!"

Etoile was gazing intently into his face as though she would read his soul. She saw in his frank, serious, earnest countenance, his perfect truthfulness. She felt and knew what he said to be a fact; many little circumstances, heretofore inexplicable, now easily to be understood, recurred to her memory in corroboration of his statement; her instinct, hitherto repressed as injustice, was now explained and justified. But the young Etoile possessed the excellent faculty of self-control. No exclamation of astonishment or loathing escaped her lips. Only with her serious eyes still questioning Willful's countenance, in a low voice, she further inquired—

"But why should he have abandoned his betrothed? She was such a noble girl! one of nature's queens! I saw her once, you know, before ever trouble came to her, a Boadicea she looked! a royally beautiful Amazon! Why should he have abandoned her?"

"For the prospect of a higher prize, no doubt, young lady."

"Tell me all you know of this man, Mr. Brande."

"Miss L'Orient, I will. And do you pardon me for the pain I may give you in the recital."

Etoile folded her hands together and listened intently, while Willful Brande related the story to Julius, from the time of his adoption by Captain Brande, to that of his betrothal to Barbara. He concluded by exposing the evident fraud, by which Luxmore had succeeded in creating the false impression of his own death.

Etoile listened, struggling to remain calm and self-possessed; but the trouble of her heart revealed itself in the disturbance of her countenance. True, as the reader knows, Etoile had never truly loved and never thoroughly esteemed

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Julius Luxmore, still it was terrible to discover in one who had so long been her companion, teacher, and confidant, such utter unworthiness.

"Oh! it was base, it was wicked, it was atrocious, to have abandoned his betrothed, the orphan daughter of his friend, in the hour of her bitterest need, even augmenting her anguish by laying upon her heart the grief of his supposed death! Oh, it was heinous! There can scarcely be pardon or redemption for a soul like that—God have mercy on him!" cried Etoile, bursting into tears and dropping her face upon her hands.

"I said that I should pain you—pray forgive me!" pleaded Willful.

"There is nothing to forgive; but much to thank you for," said Etoile, wiping her eyes, and holding out her hand.

The youth respectfully pressed the little hand and resigned it. And both were silent for some minutes, during which Etoile looked deeply thoughtful. At last the maiden spoke:—

"Mr. Brande, you are older than I am, and you know so much more of the world, that you can counsel me in this strait."

"Young hostess, I would to heaven I had the experience and wisdom to advise you, since you have no wiser friend. But it may be, God will bless an honest intention, and put good counsel into my mouth. Say on, Miss L'Orient."

"I will tell you, first of all, what I know of my own story, which may aid you in judging what is best to be done."

"Speak, young lady; I listen."

Etoile, after a pause of thoughtful self-recollection, commenced and related, with conscientious exactness, the short story of her young life.

Willful listened with the profoundest interest, and, during

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the progress of her narrative, became fully confirmed in his impression that the Island maiden was really the lost child of the beautiful Estelle. Still, discretion held him silent upon this point; because, for all that he knew to the contrary, that lovely lady might now be numbered with the dead; and not for the world would he raise hopes in the breast of her daughter, that might end in disappointment. He resolved, that before hinting to Etoile the discovery he had made, he would consult Barbara.

"You do not speak, Mr. Brande," she said.

"It is because your story has so deeply interested me. But name the point upon which you wished my humble counsel, Miss L'Orient."

"It is this—and oh, even while I speak, my heart shudders with the fear that there may not be time to carry out my plan! I shall not marry Mr. Luxmore—will not! cannot! Do you hear? Nevertheless, see! a wind has sprung up from the north, and every hour from this time we may look to see his sail bearing down upon the Island. He will come with the lawyer, the clergyman, and the license, to claim my hand and carry me away."

"Miss L'Orient, fear nothing. No power on earth can compel you to give him your hand."

"Oh, I know that!" replied Etoile, proudly; "simply because, though all the forces of earth were brought to bear upon me, I would refuse, and meet the consequences."

"There shall no evil happen to you so help me Heaven! I am by your side," exclaimed Willful, in a rush of enthusiasm, that seemed to give him the strength of a lion, or rather of a host.

"You are brave and faithful, I do not doubt. But my guardian is armed with legal powers over my person and my fate that, believe me, I feel sure he would not scruple to use to the utmost, to gain his purposes."

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"True—good Heaven!"

"Therefore, you see, I must escape from the Island. My resolution is formed," said the maiden, who, woman-like, had first made up her mind, and then asked advice. Willful saw that she had unconsciously taken this initiative course, and before offering any advice, he wished to know her own thoughts.

"Escape! but how, whither, under what protection? Speak, Miss L'Orient, for I am at your utmost disposal."

"I have money, boats, and servants. I propose to lade a boat, and go to Heathville, attended by two servants, and escorted by yourself, if you are so good. At Heathville, we can get some conveyance to New York, where you can put me in the care of my faithful Maman, Madeleine."

Her plan betrayed such simple ignorance of life, that Willful Brande listened in amazement.

Nothing now could be easier than to run away with and marry this beautiful and wealthy heiress, whom, besides, he worshiped with all the ardor of a young heart's first and passionate love. And nine out of ten, placed in such circumstances, would have yielded to the temptation of which he certainly felt the force.

But Willful Brande was, as I have said, the soul of honor; not for a kingdom—not even for his loved one—would he stain his manhood with a single unworthy act. He remained silent and thoughtful, not knowing how, with sufficient delicacy, to convey to her the knowledge that her plan was inadmissible.

"You do not answer me, Mr. Brande," she said.

"Young lady, because I do not know how to explain to one so inexperienced, that the proposed plan, if carried out, would expose you to much censure."

"But why?" inquired the maiden, in much amazement.

"Because a young man, unless he is a near relative, is not considered a proper escort in a long journey for a young

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lady. Besides, it would be almost impossible in the wilderness of New York city to find your nurse Madeleine, nor even if found would she, only a mulatto servant, however good and faithful, be considered a proper protector for a young lady," replied Willful, with a deep sigh, for the temptation was overcome, but the prize was lost.

"Then what *shall* I do to escape this impending danger? You see, now, how necessary your counsel is to me."

"Heaven save the poor maiden who has no wiser counselor than the youth who loves her," thought Willful to himself.

"Well, Mr. Brande, well, can you advise me what to do?"

"Have you no friends or acquaintance upon the main land in whom you could place confidence?"

"Oh, no! none but old Doctor Crampton, who lives at Heathville, with his two old maiden sisters."

"The very man, if he would only be friendly to you. He looks honest and courageous."

"Oh, he *is* honest and brave! I have known him a long time—I never had a doubt of him," said Etoile, warmly.

"And do you think he would befriend you against your guardian?"

"Yes, if his conscience were satisfied, for he loves me as his own child."

"And how far is Heathville from this place?"

"Before this wind, about two hours' sail."

"Then your course is clear, Miss L'Orient. Order your boat to be prepared. While it is being got ready, pack up such necessary articles, or such valuables, as you may wish to carry with you; take your servants, Moll and Timon, to attend you; and I will myself escort you in safety and honor to the house of your old friend the physician, to whom you will tell your story, and under whose protection you can appeal from your guardian's authority to the Orphans' Court."

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"There will be no impropriety in that, of course?"

"Not the slightest—else I had not proposed it."

"And you, what will you do?" inquired the maiden, with interest.

"After having seen you in honor and safety under the protection of friends, I shall go on my way to Baltimore," replied the young man, smothering the sigh that arose in his bosom.

"And—when shall I see you again?" inquired the young girl, in a tremulous tone.

"Would you care ever to see me more?" asked Willful, in a voice full of deep emotion.

"Indeed I should! And I wish to know before we separate when I shall see you again, so that I may have the joy of looking forward to that time."

"When the Lord and yourself wills," replied Willful, earnestly.

"If it depended upon my will it should be very soon," she said, gently.

"But in the meantime, if your friends approve, I would like to write to you, Miss L'Orient."

"Why, of course my friends will approve, why should they not?" she artlessly inquired.

Willful smiled sadly, shook his head, and instead of replying directly to the question, said:—

"Delays are dangerous, Miss L'Orient."

"Oh! I know they are! especially in this instance, when any hour may bring my guardian's sail in sight. I will go now and pack up. Will you do me the favor to order the boat?"

Willful nodded in obedience, and Etoile hurried away.

Great was the astonishment of the Island servants when they learned that their young lady, who had never before left her insular home, was now about to take a trip to Heathville, to see old Doctor Crampton and his maiden

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sisters. For the latent object of the visit was of course withheld from their knowledge. They settled it among themselves that the old physician, when last at the Island, must have given the invitation; and after their first surprise was over, they declared that it was natural and right for their young lady to have this recreation.

"But what shall we say to Marse Julius, if he should come 'fore you get back, Miss Etwill?" inquired one of the old men.

"Tell him where I have gone—that is all," answered the maiden. "Once in sanctuary there, I have no cause to fear him," she mentally added.

It was with a deeply agitated mind and a wildly beating heart that Etoile, attended by Willful Brande, and followed by her two faithful servants, took her way down to the boat that waited to bear her from the only home she had ever known, to those untrodden shores she had so ardently desired to reach.

When about half way down the lowest avenue leading from the house to the landing, she met a little negro boy running toward her with the joyful countenance of one who thinks he brings glad tidings.

"Oh! Miss Etwill," said the lad, "the packet has just come to anchor out there, an' Marse Julius an' some gem-men are in the long-boat, rowin' to the shore."

"Oh, Heaven!" exclaimed Etoile, clasping her hands

"Fear nothing, young lady," said Wilfull.

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CHAPTER XLV.

THE RIVALS.

"The hand of Douglass is his own!
And never shall in friendly grasp,
The hand of such as Marmion clasp."—*Scott.*

A BOAT was pushed up on the sands, and a party consisting of Julius Luxmore and two gentlemen landed, and advanced up the avenue toward the spot where Etoile and Willful remained awaiting them. Mr. Luxmore started and frowned at beholding a strange youth standing by the side of his jealously-guarded ward; but in a moment he regained his composure and concealed his annoyance. Meeting the young pair, he bowed to both at once; then greeted his young charge by name and presented to her, in turn, the Reverend Doctor Goode and Mr. Attorney Bonde.

The maiden, who had remained standing pale and firm, awaiting this rencounter, responded to these introductions only by cold bows.

Then Mr. Luxmore said, in a low and courteous voice, free from any sign of the vexation he really felt, and speaking as though recalling his ward to a sense of propriety—

"Present your guest, my dear Etoile."

But before the young lady could comply, Willful Brande stepped forward somewhat boldly, and said—

"It appears that you have forgotten your old captain's son, Mr. Luxmore?"

Luxmore started and changed color; but instantaneously recovering his presence of mind, he exclaimed—

"Truly, my young friend, I had not at first recognized

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you; but, then, so many years have elapsed since we met. How are you, Mr. Brande?" and offered his hand.

But Willful drew his tall form up to its fullest height, folded his arms, and fixed a glance full of scorn steadily upon the face of the recreant.

"Why will you not take my offered hand, Willful?" inquired Luxmore, forcing a smile.

"No, Sir! I take the hand of no traitor."

"What do you mean by that, sir?" exclaimed Luxmore, growing white about the lips.

"Shall I explain, sir? I am quite ready to do so," retorted Willful, scornfully.

"Oh, I do not doubt that you would force a quarrel upon me here, in the presence of a lady and a clergyman; but *I* have more respect for such company; another time, sir! another time!" replied the detected villain, seizing the sole pretext that presented itself for the postponement of the exposure.

"As you will," said Willful Brande, his lip curling.

"Gentlemen, move forward to the house, if you please. Etoile, my dear, take my arm. Good-afternoon, Mr. Brande," said Luxmore, with the air of dismissing Willful.

But Etoile shrank from the traitor's offered arm, and merging the bashfulness of the girl in the dignity of the lady hostess, she went around to her guest, and with a stately courtesy said—

"Mr. Brande, will it please you to return to the house?"

Willful started, bowed, and smiled acceptance of her invitation. He then, with an air of deep respect, offered his arm. But Etoile, with her nice sense of propriety, with a gracious smile and shake of the head, declined the proffered assistance, and walked on singly.

Mr. Luxmore came to her side, and in a low, stern voice inaudible to other ears, inquired:

"Miss L'Orient, what is the meaning of this conduct?"

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"It means, Mr. Luxmore, that before this affair proceeds further, you and myself must have a serious conversation," replied the young girl, in no degree daunted by the frowns of the unmasked perjurer, but solicitous to preserve, before strangers, the proprieties of peace.

"Ah, I see how it is; but do not think to escape me. An hour hence decides our destiny!" muttered Luxmore, as he left her side and drew near to his guests, the clergyman and the lawyer.

They soon now reached the house. Mr. Luxmore and his friends passed into the drawing-room.

Willful Brande, feeling the awkwardness of his position, yet determined not to desert the cause of the friendless girl, threw himself on the wicker settee in the hall.

Etoile went into her own boudoir, and sat down to collect her thoughts, and nerve herself for the coming altercation with her guardian. She had not long remained alone before the door opened, and old Moll entered, bearing a large but light bandbox, which she set upon the table and opened, and from which she drew forth a splendid bridal dress and vail.

"Come, Miss Etwill, honey, better make haste an' 'ray yourself 'cause Marse Julius whispered to me, how de passon and the lawyer were a waitin', an' how he hiss'f wanted to get off from here 'fore night wid de tide."

"Go and tell Mr. Luxmore that I wish to see him here immediately, and do you also return and remain within the sound of my voice."

The old woman obeyed, and almost immediately afterward, Mr. Luxmore entered—his fair face pallid, his hazel eyes glittering with excitement. He saw at a glance—by the compressed lips, steady eyes and stern brow of Etoile that his power over her was in a great measure gone—that he would never more influence her through her love, however he might through her *fears*. He did not understand

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that the only manner in which that young creature could be governed was through her affections or through her conscience.

Burying all these misgivings in the depths of his secretive and guileful heart, however, he resolved to take a daring course, ignoring any change, and addressing her, as though nothing had happened to peril their friendship. He advanced, holding out his hand, and saying with an affectation of joyous confidence—

"Well, my fair bride, what is your sweet capricious will with me?"

"Stand back, sir!" exclaimed Etoile, recoiling and holding up her hand in deprecation of his further advance.

"What the demon do you mean by this, Miss L'Orient?" he exclaimed, simulating astonishment and honest indignation.

"I wonder, sir, that the presence of Willful Brande on this Island does not of itself explain my meaning!" said Etoile, with dignity.

"True, by all the Cupids!" cried Luxmore, with a sardonic laugh; "during my absence to arrange the preliminaries of our marriage, a beardless boy gets himself shipwrecked on the Island, and that circumstance suffices to cause you to meet with scorn one who comes by agreement to claim your promised hand."

"Yes, Mr. Luxmore, and why?—Because it falls out in conversation that ere you offered to my acceptance a perjured heart, you basely broke faith with one of the noblest creatures that ever trod the earth—one to whom not only the ties of affection but of plighted faith, and of gratitude, should have bound you through life and unto death—your patron's daughter, Barbara Brande. You broke faith with her under circumstances that so deepen and darken the heinousness of your perjury, as to render it unparalleled in the annals of treachery. And, in one word, Mr. Luxmore,

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before I would give my hand in marriage to such a traitor, I would thrust it into the fire and hold it there until it should be consumed to ashes!" said the maiden, with the unflinching firmness of a Mucius Scævola.

The suddenness and the severity of this retort so astounded Julius Luxmore that for a moment he stood staring the image of consternation. When volition returned, it came borne on a tide of diabolical fury. He grew livid in the face, his eyes started, his lips foamed, his form was convulsed; he strode toward her with his arm outstretched, and his fist clenched, exclaiming in the low, deep muttering, murderous tone of indomitable will and remorseless wickedness—

"Young woman! do you know that soul, body, and estate, you are mine, mine only, mine utterly—my slave, my property, my chattel; do you know, that as your sole guardian, and the disposer of your person and property, I have the power to imprison, chastise, or otherwise coerce you to my will? Answer me, minion, do you know this?"

The young creature drew her slight form up with queenly dignity and regarded the man before her with a look of such ineffable scorn, that, infuriate as he was, he blenched beneath her gaze. Then — when he had quailed, she answered, slowly—

"Mr. Luxmore, I know not how far your powers as legal guardian may permit you to go, nor how remorselessly you may use them, nor how much beyond their rightful limit you may stretch them. BUT THIS I DO KNOW," she said, and her slight form arose and dilated and her eyes blazed —"that neither man on earth, nor demon in Hades, has power to compel me to become your wife! And why? Because sooner would I give my body to be burned!"

"Ho! my girl! I can reduce your pride!" he exclaimed, striding toward her, with uplifted hands, as though to clutch her

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"Hold off! My attendants wait within call!" she said, recoiling and holding up her hand.

"Ho, ho! verily my little girl must think herself a princess!" exclaimed Julius Luxmore, with sarcastic malignity.

"Truly, I have so long lived under that illusion, that I cannot all at once dispel its influence! And thus much of queenship remains to me at least, sir, that in a strait my servants would support their legitimate mistress against her false and grasping guardian!" said Etoile, in calm dignity.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the traitor in malicious derision "I would have you to know, young Madame, that my position is a legal one, and that any resistance on the part of yourself or your servants would expose you to the punishment I should deem it proper to inflict, and them to the utmost penalties of the law—even to death!"

Etoile, at this threat of ruin to her people, changed color, but after a moment answered calmly—

"I will not then expose my devoted servants to your remorseless vengeance, Julius Luxmore; but as regards myself, your threats are unavailing; do your utmost will, you will find me immovable. No, sir! the prize that you have perjured your soul and broken a heart to gain, has escaped you!"

With a face that had not yet regained its natural color, a face of white death, but for the ferocity of those burning, brown eyes, he glared upon her a moment, and then turning, walked with rapid strides up and down the floor. He could have cursed the sudden passion that had deprived him of his presence of mind, and betrayed him to the exhibition of the very worst phase of his very bad nature. "Why the fiend! could I not have controlled my temper! I might have wrought upon her feelings, through habit, through affection, through gratitude, through pity. I might even have beaten down this young man's testimony, and secured

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her to myself! and then! and then! But now ——" he thought, grinding his teeth in rage —— "And yet it may not be too late! I may yet impress her with the belief that all my rage arose from baffled *love of her*, and if she is woman, she will forgive it!" he reflected. All at once, with his great power of simulation, he changed his expression of countenance, from rage and hatred to passionate love and despair, and burying his face in his hands, walked up and down, groaning in heart-broken tones—"Etoile! oh, Etoile!"

But the young lady paid no attention to his change of mood. Mindful, amid all her distress, of her duties as hostess, she touched her bell, and when her aged attendant opened the door, she said—

"Aunt Moll, go and give orders in the kitchen, that supper be prepared for these strangers, and afterward do you see to the guest chambers in case they should remain all night."

And when the old dame withdrew to obey, Etoile took her needle-work, and went and sat in her favorite shaded window-seat, to pursue her work.

"Oh, Etoile! my Etoile!" moaned Luxmore, with his face buried in his hands, as he strode to and fro.

She bestowed not the slightest notice upon his raving, but quietly continued her sewing. Suddenly he broke off from his walk, and threw himself down beside her, and attempted to seize her hand. She shrank in abhorrence from him. He did not pursue the point, but, breaking forth in a simulation of vehement passion, exclaimed—

"Oh, Etoile, Etoile, you are angry, outraged, and it is natural that you should feel thus toward me! I was mad, phrenzied, to have used such language toward you, my love, my bride, my queen! But oh, child! child! you do not understand the impassioned heart of man! how his love betrayed, wounded and repulsed, turns to madness, insti-

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gating him to say and do things at other times abhorrent to his soul! He may become a brute, and rage as I have raged to you, or a fool, to fill some lunatic's cell, or a homicide, and slay his false love! I would not hurt one golden ringlet of your beautiful head—and yet see how you have maddened me."

Etoile threaded her needle afresh, and quietly pursued her work.

"Oh, Etoile! Etoile! how can you go on calmly with such trifles, when you behold my agony?"

"How could *you* go on calmly with your lustrum of falsehood, and leave that bereaved and broken-hearted girl to struggle through her hard life alone?" retorted the maiden, with the color flushing for an instant to her cheek.

"Oh, Etoile, my child! be not so cruel! Look in my face!"

"I cannot see it for the face of Barbara Brande, that is ever before me in her long years of faithful maiden widowhood!"

"Etoile! Etoile! you will drive me mad! pursue me to desperation! arm my hand against—not you, beloved and beautiful one; forgive me, that in my extremity of phrenzy, I ever said a thing so atrocious—but against my own wretched life!"

Even this raving failed to produce the least effect upon the young lady, who went on composedly with her work.

"Behold how you treat me! I who have loved you above all earthly things, from your infancy up! I who watched over your culture——"

"My *intellectual* culture only. The Lord pity me if you had the direction of my *moral* training. For all this, Mr. Luxmore, I am just as grateful as I should be to a guardian who educated his ward, an heiress, for his own pride, pleasure, and benefit, and with the view of her eventually

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becoming his own wife!" said the maiden with cool contempt.

"But it was because I loved you! I loved you, my Etoile, above all created beings!"

"Aye! you loved me so well that you confined me closely to this Island, where I panted like a caged bird for freedom, and where you made my marriage with yourself the only condition of my liberation!"

"Well! yes! little as you understand it, child, that which you have spoken in irony was indeed true! I love you, my inestimable treasure, so exclusively, that I cannot endure that the covetous eyes of another should rest upon you. Yet, once mine irrevocably, I shall take you all over the world—I shall devote my life to the sweet task of making you happy! But, how do you repay my love? Oh, Etoile, how do you repay it? I go away to prepare for our marriage; I make all proper arrangements; I lay the whole city under contribution for your pleasure; I fill my vessel with its costliest treasures for my Etoile; I set sail for home; storms endanger my vessel, and calms delay her; yet, at last, I reach the house of my love; 'all on fire with joy' I rush to meet you; and how am I received? With coldness, frowns, and scorn! And all because a stranger youth is wrecked upon your shoals, and fills your ear with a tale of scandal, to which you give a ready credulity, and upon which, without proof on his side or defense on mine, you condemn me!"

"I must answer that! He filled my ear with no tale of scandal! Even could he have done so, I would not have believed it! The truth came out too naturally, too providentially, to have it mistaken for falsehood! We both happened to speak of you—he as his dear brother-in-law, wrecked in the Mercury. I, as my esteemed guardian, saved from the Mercury. But when we approached the subject—like two clouds charged with electricity—the truth,

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as lightning, flashed forth broad and bright! There was no mistaking it. Nor was that truth unsupported by proof—a score of circumstances, trifling singly, overwhelming in the mass—started up in my memory to corroborate the testimony! and my own purest and profoundest instincts—long felt and long repressed—arose to confirm it? For yourself, though your case appears to me to be indefensible, yet I am ready to hear what you have to say in its defense!"

Julius Luxmore was specious and plausible; he raised his eyes to her face and said with an unctuous earnestness:

"My Etoile, the subject of my defense is scarcely fit for your delicate hearing. My passion for the beautiful Barbara was a mere boyish flame that must soon have vainly burned out. But there existed certain imminent reasons why the family of Miss Brande should earnestly desire her early marriage; thence they took advantage of my childish predilection; they imposed upon my inexperience; in a word, they entrapped me into an engagement with this fallen goddess; and doubtlessly I should have suffered myself to be finally and fatally victimized, had I not been so *fortunate* as to be wrecked from her father's vessel, the Mercury, and to find myself rescued and invested with the sole guardianship of an orphan heiress whom it was my bounden duty to seek and cherish. Etoile, I sought and found you, the one angel of my life whom I have loved with a constantly increasing strength from the first moment of our meeting to the present day. Etoile, this is my defense!"

To all this Etoile replied—

"Were it possible, Mr. Luxmore, for me to think worse of you than I thought an hour ago, your defense must have produced the effect of making me do so. When I listen to you, I am led to believe that an evil heart must cloud a man's brain, so that he has not intellectual power sufficient

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to deceive any save those whose perceptive faculties may be also obscured from the same cause. Besides, Mr. Luxmore, your mask fell quite off during the 'short madness' to which you so lately succumbed!"

The simplicity of her character, upon which Julius Luxmore had so long practiced, upon which he had so long relied for the accomplishment of his ends, was now turned against him; and the honest verdict of her upright mind was delivered with a freedom, plainness and directness, that none but a creature so unconventional might have had, under such circumstances, the courage to exercise.

Julius Luxmore, more self-controlled than at first, paused some time to reflect upon the manner in which he should proceed. Then he renewed the attack. Persuasion, arguments, threats were used in turn, and used in vain. Her affections, her reason, and her fears were successively and fruitlessly appealed to. Two hours were spent in a discussion that it would be tedious here to repeat, as, after all, it embodied what had been said before.

At last, finding all his efforts to move her to his purposes unavailing, Julius Luxmore once more lost his presence of mind, and approaching her, exclaimed, in the deep tone of concentrated rage—

"Very well, minion! You who despise my love shall feel my power!"

"Mr. Luxmore, I almost pity you, that you should be so weak as to suppose that you can intimidate me!" replied the brave girl, calmly.

"Do you deny my authority?" he demanded, in a voice of fury.

"I intend to appeal from you, who have abused your sacred trust, to the Orphans' Court for protection!" she answered, quietly.

"You do! ha, ha, ha! Why, minion, you are a prisoner.

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You shall not stir beyond this room until you cross its threshold as my wife."

"In that case I should remain here until my mortal frame returned to dust. But you are mistaken, Mr. Luxmore; I shall appeal for a hearing before the Orphans' Court through a friend who has been made acquainted with all my wrongs!"

"Aye! that—that—*miscreant*, Willful Brande!" exclaimed Luxmore, in a voice interrupted and almost inarticulate with rage.

"No, sir; but through an aged gentleman to whom Mr. Brande shall go," replied Etoile, clipping her thread, and quietly folding up her finished work.

"He shall! but in the meantime there will be delay, during which you will be in my power—and then! then in the meantime! ——"

——"I will trust in God, desperate sinner! and no evil shall befall me!" said Etoile, rising to leave the room. But quick as lightning, Julius Luxmore intercepted and passed her, went out and turned the key upon his prisoner.

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CHAPTER XLVI.

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS.

"There are swift hours in life—strong rushing hours—
That do the work of tempests in their might!
They shake down things that stood as rocks and towers
Unto th' undoubting mind; they pour in light
Where it but startles, like a burst of day;
For which the uprooting of an oak makes way;
They touch with fire thought's graven page—the roll
Stamped with past years—and lo! it shrivels as a scroll!"—*Hemans.*

In the meanwhile, Willful Brande walked up and down he front piazza, musing upon the strange situation of the beautiful and friendless maiden. The more he reflected upon the character and position of her guardian, the more strongly he became convinced of the imminent necessity of her being immediately delivered from his power. That Julius Luxmore would not scruple to make use of any means for the accomplishment of his purposes he felt assured. The question with which his mind labored was, how to effect her escape. While intensely studying this problem, his eye fell upon old Timon sauntering alone through the grove. In the time that he had spent on the Island, he had especially noticed the great devotion of this aged servant to his fair young mistress. He walked rapidly down the steps, across the lawn, and into the grove, where the old man lingered.

Timon took off his hat with his usual humble "Sarvint, marster."

"Timon—come further into the shade. I want to speak to you of your young mistress. Tell me, now, whom do you love best—Miss L'Orient, or Mr. Luxmore?"

Timon looked up with a sly, intelligent smile, and said:

"Young marster, I sees how things be gwine on! I done

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took notice ob Mr. Julius a-comin' up from de boat; an', likewise, ob Miss Etwill. I sees good how she ain't got a minit for him now; and as for me, young marster, I is willin to do any thin' in dis worl' to 'mote de happiness ob Miss Etwill."

Willful blushed, lest his own motives should be misconstrued, even by this most humble of judges, and he hastened to say:

"The change in your young lady's opinion of her guardian is not without the best reasons. And all that is necessary to promote her happiness is to get her out of his power, and under the protection of her old friend, Dr. Crampton and his sisters, from whose house she can appeal to the Orphans' Court."

While making this confidence, Willful Brande had narrowly watched the countenance of the old man, whose honest gaze did not once flinch, and who now replied:

"You may trus' me to de def wid anythin' as is for Miss Etwill's good."

"I do believe you. But is there any among the women for whose fidelity in such a matter you could answer? because, in her escape, Miss L'Orient should have a female attendant."

"Marster, I can be sponsious for my ole 'oman, Moll—dat is all. Not but what all de oders is hones' 'nough, an' love Miss Etwill 'nough; but den, marster, dey's 'feared o' Marse Julius. So, I wouldn' like to trust 'em."

"Can you procure a boat—let us see—between midnight and day?"

"Who, me? Better 'lieve so, young marster! I has de s'preme 'trol ob de boats."

"Then select a good, sound, safe boat, such as may be managed by me and you. And, let me see—the most unfrequented part of the Island is the bathing pool of your young lady, Crystal Creek?"

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"True for you, marster; no one ever sets foot there, 'cept Miss Etwill and her maid."

"And the quietest time in the twenty-four hours is about two o'clock in the morning. Now, Timon, can you have the boat in readiness on Crystal Creek about that hour?"

"Sartain, marster!"

"How will you be able to know the time?"

"Marster, I gwine lay awake till midnight. I allers knows when it is midnight by de crowin' o' de roosters; an' sure*lie* I can guess at an hour or two beyant; anyways, ef I should be a minit *before* two o'clock, be sure I won't be half a second *arter*."

"Very well. Be vigilant and faithful, and you shall be richly rewarded, old man," replied Willful. And, after a little more immaterial conversation, concerning the details of the plans, these justifiable conspirators separated—the old man to cautiously commence the preliminary arrangements of the flight, and the youth to seek the house, and, if possible, find means to communicate the plan to Etoile. As he turned to leave the spot, the sound of a quick, retreating step fell on his ear. He started, listened, and looked about; but neither hearing nor seeing any one, he concluded that the fugitive steps were those of a calf that he perceived gamboling at a short distance; and so, with returning confidence, he hurried onward.

He had scarcely left the grove, when the figure of a man emerged from the cover of a thicket, and with a gesture of hate and anticipated triumph, took a nearer path to the house, which, unperceived, he reached before the arrival thither of the midshipman.

When Willful Brande entered, he was met by a servant, who invited him to walk into the dining-room, where he found the supper table spread, and the clergyman and the lawyer, together with Mr. Luxmore, apparently waiting his arrival.

"Gentlemen, I bear to you the excuses of your fair young

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hostess, whom a sudden but temporary indisposition confines to her chamber. Pray be seated, and 'good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both,'" said Mr. Luxmore, as he assumed the head of the table. The board was well spread with all the substantial delicacies of the season. A footman served tea and coffee from the sideboard.

"So, Etoile is a prisoner, then," thought Willful, who was not for an instant deceived by the pretext advanced by Mr. Luxmore—"but it shall go hard but that I find means to liberate her before morning."

The indisposition of the young lady was no doubt afterward offered in explanation of the delay of the wedding.

When all left the dining-room, Willful Brande went to his chamber, wrote a few lines on a small piece of paper, rolled it into a minute parcel, returned to the lower hall, and walked to and fro the passage and the piazza, until he found an opportunity of slipping the little scroll into the hands of Moll with the swiftly whispered words:—

"Give this into the hands of your young lady as soon as possible."

With a nod of intelligence, Moll concealed the scrip.

Meantime Etoile, locked within her two rooms, "possessed her young soul in patience." Under Divine Providence her hopes rested upon Willful Brande. Though no confidential word had, since the interruption of her flight, passed between herself and the youth, she felt assured that he would not desert her cause; that he would, upon the first opportunity, leave the Island and report the case to her old friend Doctor Crampton, with the request that he would appeal in her behalf to the Orphans' Court. Meanwhile she knew the danger to which she was constantly exposed from the unscrupulous character of her guardian. She even wondered whether he would now permit her own servants to attend her

Night drew on, she heard from the distance "the tinkling

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of silver upon porcelain," sounds of preparation for the evening meal. After a few minutes she went to a side window and looked out, and saw her guardian hurrying, with disordered steps, toward the house. With a growing aversion to his presence, she recoiled and left her point of view. Soon after she heard the steps of Willful Brande enter the front door, and then all proceed to the dining-room. She closed her windows to keep out the dampness of the evening that was falling humid and heavy. Lights had not been brought her, and she sat down in darkness to meditate upon her strange position.

After awhile she heard the guests leave the dining-room and proceed to the parlor, and Julius Luxmore's voice in conversation with the two gentlemen. Next she heard the solitary step of Willful Brande pacing to and fro in the passage, up and down the piazza; but at last he, too, seemed to have left the scene, and all was silent. Half an hour passed, and then the key was turned in the lock, and her guardian, accompanied by old Moll, bearing a tray of refreshments and a light, entered.

Etoile, on seeing him, turned her back and walked off to the other end of the room. Old Moll, while busily engaged in arranging refreshments upon a little stand, cautiously endeavored to catch the eye of her young mistress, and at last succeeded in exchanging with her a significant glance.

Mr. Luxmore walked up and down the floor, watching her keenly, but not attempting to address her.

Etoile bore this with patient dignity for a little while, and then said:

"Since you use your power to confine me here, sir, you should at least show ordinary delicacy in refraining from intruding upon my privacy, at this unseemly hour of the night."

"I exercise the double privilege of your guardian and your betrothed husband, young lady. And Etoile, I wished

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again to converse with you to-night," he answered, then turning to the old servant, he added: "Moll, leave the room."

The old woman bowed obedience, and then making feints to settle the spoon and fork for her young mistress, as soon as Mr. Luxmore's back was turned upon them in his walk, she hastily slipped Willful Brande's rolled note into her hand and then withdrew from the room.

Mr. Luxmore now returned on his walk, drew a chair to the side of Etoile, and then, with all the eloquence he could command, recommenced his suit. The young girl listened with a curling lip, answered only when direct questions were put to her, and then in a manner that must have utterly repulsed any other than the desperate adventurer before her; and him it nearly maddened.

"Mr. Luxmore, it is ten o'clock—an hour past my usual one of retiring. You must see the necessity of now leaving me," at last she said, in a tone that compelled even the unscrupulous man before her to respect her words.

"Very well! I have given you this last opportunity. You are obdurate, and my course is taken!"

When he had left the room, Etoile unrolled her scrip and read:

"Miss L'Orient,—I advise you to retire early and try to sleep as much as possible between this and the hour of two in the morning. At that hour, one who watches will awaken you, and a boat will wait at the Crystal Creek to convey you to your friends on the main land. W. B."

On reading the note, with its prospect of immediate escape, the heart of Etoile leaped with gladness.

Meanwhile Willful Brande, loathing the sight of Julius Luxmore, and his possibly mercenary guests, withdrew to his own chamber, shut the door and seated himself by the

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window, to pass the time as he might in meditation, or in gazing out upon the dark, starlit expanse of waters.

Sometime after ten o'clock, he heard the guests conducted by Mr. Luxmore come up and enter their sleeping rooms, which were upon the same floor with his own. He heard their *soi disant* host, with much courtly politeness take leave of them and go down stairs. Next he heard the muffled motions of the guests in their final preparations for bed. Then all was silent, until the clock struck eleven.

"Twelve—one—two! Three hours yet! how shall I live them through, here in darkness and solitude!" exclaimed Willful to himself.

He slipped off his shoes and paced softly up and down the room for an indefinite time. Then growing impatient of that resource, he laid himself down upon his bed. But finding such absolute physical repose only the more aggravating to his mental restlessness, he started up again and resumed his pacing.

How unsupportably weary the time.

Twelve o'clock struck! Two hours yet! When *would* they come to an end? Surely the common reckoning of time must be all false! He had passed years that seemed shorter than these eternities of hours. He threw himself down once more upon his bed, and compelled himself to lie still for awhile.

He had been lying thus for a few minutes when, in the profound silence, he thought he heard the sound of a key turned in a lock, and a footstep retreating toward the hall staircase. He listened. All was silent.

"It was one of our guests, perhaps, he said to himself, and he resolved to remain perfectly quiet, lest his motions might also attract attention. But his anxiety increased. The clock struck one.

"But one hour more! Yet, oh! these hours! they seem

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eternities!" he said, as he softly left his couch and went and sat by the window.

He looked out, but all was so dark that even to his accustomed eyes, trees and houses, land and water, earth and sky, presented scarcely perceptible differences in shades of blackness.

Again he threw himself upon his couch; again grew impatient of rest, and started up to pace the room; and yet again seated himself at the window.

Finally, his guardian angel inspired him with the idea of profitably employing a portion of the weary time in praying for the success of his undertaking. He sunk upon his knees and prayed that he might be delivered from all selfish purposes and serve the friendless orphan with an eye single to her interest, and that the "Father of the fatherless" might crown his efforts in her behalf with success. As he arose from his knees the clock struck TWO!

He took his hat, stole softly to the door and pushed.

The door was fast locked! He was a prisoner.

For a moment the discovery of this fact, with all the consequences to be deduced from it, almost paralyzed his energies! But the next instant he had recovered his presence of mind and activity of resources. He suddenly recollected a chisel that had lain for days upon his mantle-shelf. It was but the work of a few mimutes to take that instrument, and with it force back the catch of the lock and free himself.

He then hurried softly through the dark and silent hall and down the stairs.

All below was mute and black as death and Erebus.

Cautiously unfastening the hall door, he paced slowly around the house until he found himself below the window of Etoile's boudoir. Against the wall leaned a ladder.

"So far—well! Timon has been punctual in placing this

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means of escape at hand," he thought. And ascending a few of the rungs he called, in a soft tone :—

"Miss L'Orient! Miss L'Orient!"—and listened. But no voice replied.

He went up further and called out louder; but without success.

Growing very anxious, he ascended to the top of the ladder, put his head in at the window, and called eagerly—"Miss L'Orient!—Miss L'Orient!" But all was dark, and cold, and still.

"This is no time for false delicacy. She must forgive me, since I mean well," said Willful, very much alarmed, as he turned himself in at the window, and grouped his way through the boudoir, and through the adjoining chamber, still calling on the name of Etoile. But neither sound nor motion answered him; all was dark and silent as death and the grave.

Etoile was gone!

Half frantic with terror, upon her account, Willful Brande hurried through the window and down the ladder, and ran with phrenzied haste straight on to the cabin of Timon, at the door of which he knocked, imperatively, exclaiming :—

"Timon! Timon! are you there? What is the meaning of this?"

"Lor, gor, a-mity, Marse Willful, honey, come in, yerself! I can't move! I done tied hand and foot!" answered the voice of the old man.

Willful pushed the door open and entered the cabin, which was as dark as any other place in that dark night.

"Feel on to de shelf dere for the match and de candle, honey, and light it, and I done tell you all about it," said Timon's voice, from the obscurity.

Willful found a match, and struck a light, that revealed to him the form of poor old Timon, bound hand and foot with strong cords and thrown upon the floor of his cabin.

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Without an instant's delay he seized a sharp knife, cut the cords, and helped the old man to his feet.

"Now then what is the meaning of all this?" inquired Willful.

"Couldn't tell you, to save my life, Marster, only I reckon how Marse Julius done found we-dem out, and outwitted us! 'Cause 'bout an hour ago, he done came here and throw me down, and tie me, and leave me here without sayin' of a word."

A terrible idea occurred to Willful.

"Come! follow me quickly! to the boat!" he said, and rushed forth into the night.

The old man hurried after as fast as age and infirmity would permit.

They reached Crystal Creek just in time, dimly to discern that a boat had left the shore, and was now some quarter of a mile out upon the bay.

"He has carried her off! He would not have done it by force, since that must have created a disturbance which would have reached my ears! He has carried her off by fraud. He will take her on board his chartered ship! Quick! prepare a boat, and let us row for life! I will follow her thither! I will board that ship! I will rescue her or die!" exclaimed Willful, vehemently.

"It will be *die*, then, Marster; but nobody sha'n't call old Timon a coward in his old days," said the poor creature, who, with the air of a martyr, went to prepare the boat.

But Willful would not let the old man risk his safety by accompanying him. Alone he entered the light skiff, and using both oars, propelled it swiftly over the water. He could no longer see the other boat, but he rowed directly for the distant ship, seen by the light at her prow, and which he naturally supposed to be the chartered vessel of Julius Luxmore.

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His light skiff flew like a sea-bird over the surface of the bay, and quickly touched the side of the vessel.

Without a moment's hesitation he scaled the ladder, and stood upon the deck, face to face with his sister, Barbara Brande, whose barque had anchored there an hour before!

"Willful!"

"Barbara!"

They gazed upon each other in amazement for a moment, and then rushed together in a hearty embrace.

And while hurried explanations occupy them, we must return to see what has become of Etoile.

We said that, on reading Willful Brande's note, with its promise of speedy release, her heart had leaped with gladness. But to follow its advice so far as to go to sleep, that was impossible! There was no repose to her excited nerves that night. However, the maiden was young and very strong, and the loss of a single night's rest would scarcely be felt by her fine organization. So she blew out her light, drew the bolts across her door, closed the blinds, and sat down by the window to watch and wait from ten till two o'clock. At eleven every one about the house had apparently retired. At twelve it was to be supposed that all were buried in sleep. And yet two hours remained of the very "witching time" of night—hours, when all nature seemed wrapped in death-like repose. Then she, every nerve acute with listening, heard her name softly breathed beneath her window. She silently opened the shutter and murmured lowly—"Do not speak again. I am here." And taking her head in, she quickly put on her bonnet and mantle, and reappeared at the window, against which a short ladder had been leaned.

A figure muffled in a large cloak, though this was July, waited at the foot. Lightly Etoile descended the rounds, where she was received by the man, who bowed, and making a signal o' silence, walked before. Etoile, with a rapidly

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beating heart, followed. Both took the direction of the Crystal Creek. The path was narrow, only one little pair of feet having been accustomed to tread it. It led through the densest portion of the thicket of woods that girdled the Island.

The guide went on in silence. Etoile followed—the palpitation of her heart, the agitation of her whole frame, preventing her from wishing to speak.

It was still very dark, so that even when they emerged from the thicket, the line of beach and the expanse of water seemed only fainter shadow. The skiff moored in the little creek looked only a blacker mark upon the dark water. The boat was alone.

"Where are my servants? Are not Moll and Timon to go with me?" inquired Etoile, for the first time speaking. in a hushed voice.

But her guide lifted up his finger to enjoin perfect silence, and took her hand to assist her into the boat. A strange misgiving upon account of the absence of her attendants seized the heart of Etoile. But as no suspicion of treachery mingled with her feelings, and as her confidence in Willful Brande remained unshaken, she firmly stepped into the boat and took her seat in the stern. Her companion followed, sat down midway, and taking up the two oars began to ply them. The boat glided swiftly over the still dark surface of the creek out into the open Bay. The rower silently directed its course toward the coast of Northumberland, that lay due west. The guide continued mute, as though he had been born dumb, and Etoile, now that she was alone upon the waters with this reserved companion, from a feeling of bashfulness remained quiet. Her misgivings increased. There seemed to be no necessity now that they were so far from land for this continued silence. It grew oppressing, alarming; she became nervous, she could bear the trial no longer, but spoke out, in a low agitated tone—

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the very sound of her own voice amid the stillness frightening her the more—inquiring—

"Mr. Brande, excuse me, please, but where are my servants? Why would they not come?"

A low derisive laugh answered her!

"My God! I am betrayed!" cried Etoile, with a stifled shriek.

"You are *entrapped*, fair plotter!" answered the voice of Julius Luxmore.

"Oh, misery, misery! oh, God help me in my bitter extremity!" she cried, in a voice of thrilling agony, burying her face in her hands and dropping her head upon her bosom.

Then followed a short pause, during which no sound was heard but the dipping of the oars; Etoile remained half stunned with sudden despair; Luxmore, scorned, repulsed and enraged as he had been by her, now, with the vengeful malignity of a fiend, gloated over the sight of her sufferings. But already the heroic young spirit was struggling to rally from the shock and throw off the benumbing weight of despair.

"What is the meaning of this, wretch?" at length she asked, in rising indignation, as she lifted up her fair head.

"I will tell you, my beauty!" replied Luxmore, in a tone of malignant triumph. "The meaning of this is, that I suspected and watched your hopeful young guest, Willful Brande; detected him in consultation with your other 'guide, philosopher, and friend,' old Timon; discovered their plan to liberate you, and determined not only to *prevent* it, but to avail myself of it, to get you more thoroughly into my power. So I had old Timon quietly put in irons, turned a key privately upon Master Willful, and offered myself beneath your window as his substitute"

"Miscreant! why have you done this?" exclaimed the young girl indignantly

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"Do not call ill names, and I will tell you, my dear," replied Luxmore, with a deliberate softness of tone that seemed to taste and chew the sweetness of revenge,—"I will tell you, my beloved! While you remained on the Island, you were in some measure out of my power, for there were present a clergyman and a lawyer, to say nothing of your lover, to protect you in an emergency. But having detected you in the plot to leave the Island, I availed myself of the opportunity of entrapping you! Your life and honor are now absolutely at my mercy."

Etoile clasped her fingers convulsively and threw her eyes despairingly over the solitary waste of sky and water, as if in hopeless appeal for help. In after years she remembered the dark, silent, sombre scene, as if it had been daguerreotyped forever on her brain. A single ship, dimly seen, lay at anchor, a short distance off; a lantern burning at her prow, threw a long line of light a cable's length ahead, just across their course.

Withdrawing her eyes from this dreary prospect, she turned them upon the dark figure of her guide.

"Traitor! whither are you taking me?"

"I will inform you, my sweet! To the Northumberland coast, to a lonely cabin of which I keep the key; which shall become the bower of my bride; and from which, when she shall emerge, she will be but too happy to have the state and church legalize and sanctify our union!" he answered, with deliberate and demoniac malice.

Etoile, who "understood a *horror* in his words, but not the words," started and recoiled to the furthest limits of her seat. They were now approaching that long line of light from the lantern in the prow of the ship at anchor that lay in their way. She cast a startling glance at the water beneath, and then a despairing gaze at the ship beyond. Oh, that ship! so near, yet for all purposes of help, so far!

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Julius Luxmore saw both look and gesture, and laughed aloud, exclaiming scornfully—"Ah, pretty one! even you see at length that you cannot escape me—'in testimony whereof, behold my hand and seal'"—and drawing in the oars, regardless of the danger of rocking the boat he darted toward her, and would have seized and embraced her; but with a terrible cry, Etoile sprang into the sea, the waves of which immediately closed over her form.

So sudden, so startling, so appalling had been this act, that Julius Luxmore for an instant remained panic stricken, but the next moment, he quickly threw off his coat, and placed himself on watch for her reappearance.

She arose above the surface of the water, at some distance from the boat, nearer the ship, and attempted to strike out bravely for the latter, but being embarrassed and weighed down by her clothing, she made no progress, and even strove in vain to keep afloat. Recovering from his first consternation, and seeing her extremity, Julius Luxmore, with a shout of vindictive triumph, urged his boat toward her struggling form. In this unequal race he must soon have reached and recaptured his prize; but that the next instant a strong swimmer let himself drop from the bulwarks of the ship, and struck out gallantly for the sinking girl, whose form he seized, and bore victoriously to the starboard gangway ladder, and up upon the deck of the—Ocean Queen!—for this was the ship of Barbara Brande, which had just an hour before dropped anchor here.

Etoile, half suffocated and half exhausted, gave vent to a convulsive sob, recovered her breath, looked up to thank her brave preserver, and recognized Willful Brande!

"Oh, may heaven repay you! but how should *you* be here whom I thought detained upon the Island?" she exclaimed, in a deeply agitated voice.

"I will inform you presently, young lady; now let me

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present you to my sister," he replied, as Barbara Brande advanced from the stern sheets.

But before they met, at the instant of Willful's speaking, a boat touched the side of the vessel, and Julius Luxmore sprung up the ladder, and stood upon the deck.

"Where is the girl you picked up, fellow? Deliver her to me; she is my fugitive child!" he exclaimed, advancing toward the group.

"Save me! save me!" cried Etoile, springing for protection to the bosom of Barbara.

"Be composed, you *are* saved!" returned the deep, low voice of the noble girl, as she folded one arm around the shrinking form of the little maiden, and lifted the other with outstretched hand to bar the nearer approach of the intruder.

"Give up that child instantly to her natural protector," he exclaimed, in a peremptory tone. It was as yet so dark in this quarter of the vessel that, being still a few paces distant, he had not recognized the persons to whom he spoke.

"Light the lanterns," ordered Barbara, in that clear, ringing, resonant voice that struck him as a sound familiar, yet long unheard.

And in another instant lights blazed from all parts of the vessel, giving to full view all the persons on the deck.

And Barbara Brande and Julius Luxmore stood face to face! For a second, the traitor quailed before her calm, clear, commanding gaze; but the next moment, rallying his courage, with desperate assurance, he said:

"Deliver up my ward! I *insist* upon it."

"Insist then, by all means, since it amuses you to do so!" replied Barbara, with cool contempt.

"*Will* you give up my ward?" he demanded, with rage.

"Oh, certainly; how can you doubt it!" mocked Barbara.

"Answer seriously, woman!"

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"It would be absurd to answer seriously, just as if you had a right to ask!"

"Release that child, I command you, girl!" he exclaimed, furiously.

"How I should love to obey your command, especially as I *adore* tyrants!" sneered Barbara.

Maddened with rage, he stole forward to seize the maiden.

"BACK, SIR, AT YOUR PERIL!" thundered Barbara, with eyes blazing with defiance, and arm extended in command, as she still sustained the maiden upon her broad bosom.

Luxmore recoiled before the "embodied storm" he had provoked.

Willful had sprung to the side of his sister, to protect both her and her charge.

"Stand aside, Willful, my son! Edwy, call all hands up!" she ordered, in her customary, clear, resounding tones.

And in a moment every man was on deck.

"Listen now to me, Julius Luxmore. Regain the custody of this girl you—can—not! either by law, force, or fraud! You are free to depart in peace, and if, in two minutes, you do not leave the ship, I will have you put in irons, and delivered up to the nearest authority."

"By what right, lawless woman, do you *dare* do this?" exclaimed Luxmore, in a voice of concentrated rage.

"That is a question that I shall know how to answer before the proper tribunal. You have heard the conditions of your being permitted to depart in peace. One minute has elapsed; with you I talk no more. Edwy, bring hither the manacles," she said, with quiet resolution.

"SHE-WOLF! you shall suffer for this!" cried Luxmore, turning white as a leper, shaking his fist convulsively, and grinding his teeth with fury, as he retreated down the ladder to regain his boat.

"Wrecked! wrecked! wrecked! worse than from the deck of the Mercury! Lost! lost! lost! a girl's dream

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and a man's soul!" murmured Barbara, unconsciously, in a tone of deep anguish, as she watched his receding skiff. Then, burying her despair deep in her own heart, she looked upon her trembling charge, who still nestled to her bosom, and said:

"Look up, sweet girl! your tormentor has gone! You are now quite safe. Come below and change your dress to lie down and rest."

It was now growing light.

Barbara took her charge down into the cabin; relieved her of her dripping clothes; supplied their place with loose and comfortable garments; made her drink a glass of cordial, and led her to her own state-room to lie down and sleep. But, before seeking repose, Etoile kneeled beside the berth and silently offered up her thanks to Heaven for the preservation of her life. Barbara lingered until the little maiden had laid her head upon the pillow; then kissed her, drew the cover over her shoulders, closed the blinds, and stole softly out of the state-room.

She crossed the cabin to an opposite door, and listened to hear if there were any stirring within. The sound of light footsteps and low voices met her ear. She rapped softly, and the door was opened by Susan Copsewood.

"Your lady is awake, Susan?"

"Yes, Miss Brande, come in."

"Yes, come in, dear girl. I have been awake for hours," said the sweet voice of Estelle.

Barbara entered, and sat down beside the berth where the lady reclined.

"The noise on deck, I suppose, awoke you, Madam."

"Yes."

"We were dropping the anchor and taking in sail. We are near the Island," said Barbara, who wished to prepare her guest for the next good news.

"Near the Island at last! It is now almost sunrise!

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How soon shall we be landed?" inquired Estelle, eagerly rising upon her elbow, and flinging back the long black ringlets that had escaped her cap and fallen—a shadowy vail around her eloquent pale face.

"You may see your daughter Etoile within an hour," answered Barbara.

Estelle's countenance beamed with joy.

"You may see her even sooner, if you can dress in less time!" continued Miss Brande.

"Susan, my dressing gown! hand me my shoes! bind up my hair! Dearest Barbara, I shall be ready as soon as you can have the boat prepared," said Estelle, leaving her berth.

"There is no need to prepare the boat," said Miss Brande, significantly.

"Oh! Barbara, what mean you?" exclaimed the lady, pausing in the preparation of her toilet, and gazing in an agony of anxiety upon her friend.

"Etoile is very near you."

"Where? where?" cried Estelle, starting up and going toward the door.

"Lady, be calm and I will give you every satisfaction," replied Barbara, taking her hand and gently but firmly re-seating her.

"One word—is she safe?"

"Safe, unmarried, unharmed, but also unprepared as yet to meet her mother. Lady, listen. I will tell you every thing, and—within half an hour, I will bring you to your daughter."

"Oh, is it possible? Am I awake and in my senses? shall I see Etoile?"

"In less than half an hour! Compose yourself and hear," said Barbara, who then commenced and related all the circumstances of the storm; the shipwreck; the saving of Willful; the subsequent eclaircissement between Etoile

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and himself in respect to her guardian; the arrival of Luxmore; the attempted flight of Etoile; the treachery to which she was subjected; her abduction by Julius Luxmore; her desperate escape and effort to swim to the ship; her rescue by Willful Brande; the coming on board of Luxmore; and, finally, the ignominious dismissal of the latter from the ship. She concluded by saying—

"And now, as I deemed it necessary that she should rest before having another subject of excitement, I refrained from speaking of her mother, and left her to repose."

"Miss Brande! oh, let me gaze upon her in her sleep!" prayed the lady, clasping her hands.

"I will first see if she is sleeping, Madam," replied Barbara, leaving the state-room. In a few minutes she returned and said—

"She is sleeping the deep sleep of exhaustion—you can enter softly, lady."

With a wildly beating heart and suspended breath, Estelle passed into the opposite state-room, sat down beside the berth, and gazed upon her daughter. Beautiful was that sleeping image. One snowy arm doubled up on the pillow, supported her blooming face; her white eyelids were lightly closed over the violet eyes, the lashes lying delicately penciled on her fresh rose cheeks; her golden hair flowed in glittering disorder down ever forehead, side-face, and bosom; her other arm drooped gracefully over the counterpane.

Estelle gazed in a sort of still rapture upon her lovely child, longing, yet afraid, ever so lightly to touch her. At length the temptation to lay her lips upon that seraph face grew irresistible, and light as the fall of a winter rose-leaf on the snow, dropped the mother's first kiss upon the maiden's pure brow. Soft as was the touch, Etoile felt it in her sleep; her ruby lips parted in a smile; her eyelids half unclosed.

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Estelle, fearful of surprising her, arose and quietly withdrew from the room.

Half an hour after Barbara entered—Etoile was lying wide awake, her rosy lips half parted, her violet eyes half vailed in a dreamy smile.

"How do you feel, my dear?" inquired Barbara.

"Ah! Miss Brande, I have had such a sweet dream! so seeming real, that I can scarcely dispel the illusion! I was dreaming of my mother; I thought that she was living, and that she had found me; I thought that she was sitting by my bed, and oh! she was so beautiful! so beautiful! just what I supposed her to be! just like the miniature I painted of her, only so much more divinely beautiful! I dreamed she stooped and pressed the softest kiss upon my brow, and while her lips were upon my forehead, and her soft black ringlets touched my cheeks, I awoke and found it was all a dream! And yet, withal, it still seems so real, that I can scarcely believe I dreamed," said Etoile, closing her eyes and smiling, as if to charm back the vision.

"But suppose it was no dream, dear girl?" said Barbara, in an agitated voice.

Etoile's eyes flared wide open, and her color went and came.

"Suppose it was reality—suppose that your mother really did sit beside you in your sleep, and withdrew when you awoke?"

A tumultuous rush of emotion crimsoned and paled her face, and took away her breath as she eagerly listened.

"What if your mother had met with Madeleine in New York, had heard of your existence and residence, and had embarked on this very vessel to seek you at the Island?"

"Oh, it is! it is so! I have seen my mother! I have had her kiss!" cried Etoile, shaken, as a rose-tree is shaken by a storm—"where, where, Miss Brande, where is she now?"

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"Here, my beloved child! here, my long-lost darling, here!" cried the voice of the lady, as she opened the door and entered.

Etoile sprung up in a sitting position, and threw herself toward the lady, who opened her arms to receive her, and murmuring—"Mother"—fell fainting upon her bosom. No possible care could have prepared Etoile for a meeting like this! It must necessarily have overwhelmed her.

"Joy never kills—be not uneasy," said Barbara, as she lifted the fainting girl from the bosom of Estelle, and replaced her on the berth. And indeed their united efforts soon recalled the absent senses of their charge. Then Barbara, with her eyes full of tears, withdrew and left the mother and child together.

Who can describe that first interview, indeed for many reasons indescribable? But who can *not* picture to themselves, the first tumultuous emotion; the strange, dreamy joy; the first incoherent conversation; the sudden plunge into the past history of each; the breathless questions and and answers; the impulsive embraces; the long, silent pauses, with the form of the maiden pressed closely within the arms of the mother; and at last the calmer hour, when this strong emotion had subsided, and both sat quietly side by side, comparing the story of their late lives, or rather Etoile giving up the whole of hers to her mother's earnest inquiries.

Like two lovely sisters they looked, the one so dark, the other so fair, yet both alike in features, form and air, and both so surpassingly beautiful!

The prophecy of both hearts was now fulfilled. The mother had found her child—the child her mother! And for the time being the whole world was forgotten.

Barbara long delayed the breakfast; but when the hour of nine arrived, she thought that even for the good health

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of those two absorbed creatures, she should call them So going to the state-room door, she rapped, and said—

"Breakfast awaits your leisure, lady."

"I thank you, Miss Brande," said the voice of Estelle who immediately opened the door, and led her daughter to her own state-room, where Susan Copsewood waited.

"Little shipwrecked maiden, you must wear your mother's dress," said the lady, as she seated the girl on the side of the berth. Then seeing Susan, she added—

"Etoile, this young woman is the faithful friend of whom I told you, Susan, speak to my child."

But poor, good Susan, was too deeply moved to speak, and only took the hand of the maiden, raised it to her lips and burst into tears. Etoile pressed *her* hand and looked gratefully in her face. Then with affectionate zeal, Susan dressed her "young lady" as she termed her mistress's daughter. And soon they passed out to breakfast. The table was spread in the cabin, Barbara presided over the coffee service.

"I miss some one here—my favorite, Willful, now doubly dear to me as the preserver of my daughter's life. Where is he, Miss Brande?" inquired the lady, as she took her seat at the board.

"Willful refrains from intruding, yet I know he would be happy to pay his respects to you, Madam," answered Barbara.

"Then pray have him called."

Edwy arose from his place and summoned his brother.

Willful entered the cabin, bowing. The lady looked up and held out her hand.

"Mr. Brande, all human words and thanks are poor and weak to express how much I owe you for the protection of this child. God grant that in the future, Willful, I may be able to prove what I now feel!" said the mother, as her bosom heaved and her eyes overflowed.

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Willful, with much grace, lifted the hand of the lady respectfully to his lips, and said—

"Madam, I am more blessed than I ever deserved to be, in having been, in ever so humble a degree, able to serve you, and——" he paused suddenly and sent a swift, shy glance at Etoile. The lady followed that glance and saw the quick blushes of both youth and maiden as their eyes met. She saw and understood and thought—

"Is it so? Well, well, he has saved her life and honor! Let him keep the fair promise of his youth! Let him be worthy of her, and when a proper time comes he shall have her!"

"Sit down, Willful, and take a cup of coffee," said his sister, to break up an embarrassing pause. He seated himself and the breakfast went forward.

After the morning meal was over, there was a consultation in the cabin.

"It will be necessary for you, lady, to go to the county-town to take certain legal steps to enable you to assume the guardianship of your daughter and her patrimony. The county-town is Eastville, which, you know, lies back of my old home, the Headland. Therefore, if you please, we will steer directly for the Headland.

The lady eagerly acquiesced. And in half-an-hour the anchor was got up and the ship set sail for her new destination.

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CHAPTER XLVII

THE RE-UNION.

"'Twas his own voice, she could not err
Throughout the breathing world's extent,
There was but one such voice for her,
So kind, so soft, so eloquent!—*Moore.*

There's not a look, a word of thine,
My soul hath e'er forgot!
Thou ne'er didst bid a ringlet shine,
Nor give thy locks one graceful twine,
Which I remember not!"—*Ibid.*

AT eleven o'clock the Ocean Queen cast anchor off the Headland. The long-boat was lowered, and the mother and daughter, with Barbara and her two brothers, entered it and were rowed across to the beach. They landed, and began to ascend the bank. At the top they overtook old Neptune, with a basket of soft crabs in his hand. His mistress took him aside and spoke to him.

"Has any one come, Neptune?"

"Lors yes, chile, come dis mornin'—four, five, ever so fine folks, an' the fine English lords as was here some years back. Amphy, she done gone up to get dinner. I gwine carry up de fish now."

"Very well, go on," said Barbara, who then returned to the side of Estelle. They were approaching the house.

"It appears to me that the place is occupied," said Estelle.

"Madam—yes, it is occupied temporarily."

They ascended the steps, and paused a moment at the door.

"Lady," said Barbara, "you have fine nerves, and the great self-control that they give—exert it now."

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"Miss Brande, what mean you?" inquired Estelle, in some alarm.

"I told you that your parents were seeking you!"

"Yes—well?"

"They are not far off. Come into your old bed-chamber and lay off your bonnet, and compose yourself for a few minutes," said Miss Brande, opening the door, and conducting Estelle and her daughter into a back room. Then, while they arranged their dress, she passed into the parlor and closed the door after her. And though a lady of distinguished presence and three gentlemen occupied the room, she lifted her finger to her lip as a sign of silence, and advanced straight up to the youngest of those gentlemen. He arose to receive her, saying, in a low voice:—

"Miss Brande, your letter has brought not only myself but, as you see, our whole party—Sir Parke, Lady Morelle, and Dazzleright. Oh, Barbara, surely you could not hold out any but a certain hope."

"Speak softly, Lord Eagle Tower. She is not far off. She does not know your presence here."

Sir Parke, who had also approached the spot where she stood, heard this piece of news, and reeled as if he would have fallen. Lady Morelle hastened to his side, and led him to the nearest seat, wiped the beaded drops from his brow, and held her vinaigrette to his nostrils. Her ladyship had, certainly, the most self-command of the whole party. As soon as the enfeebled old father recovered his composure, Barbara took Lord Eagle Tower aside and said—

"I will bring her in now. You and Lord Dazzleright had best retire for a few minutes."

He nodded—he could scarcely speak—for he too was very much shaken.

Barbara slipped through the door, and met face to face

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with Estelle, who was standing there as rigid and as white as marble, with her eyes turned toward the parlor.

Barbara closed the door, took her hand, and led her a little way back into the chamber.

"Lady—dear Madam, what is the matter?"

"Montressor! Montressor!—If ever I heard Montressor's voice, I heard it just now! Oh, it was so low, yet I heard it!'

"Yes, you heard it. Compose yourself, dear lady. Summon your great strength, and go in! Leave Miss L'Orient here with me a moment;" and she opened the door.

Estelle passed through, and entered the shadowy parlor —the tumult of her mind causing the scene to swim before her—so that at first she could not distinguish persons.

But an aged form tottered toward her, and fell upon her neck, saying:

"Oh, Estelle, my child! my child! can you pardon your old father?"

She sank at his feet, and kissed his hands, and said:

"Forgive and bless *me*, my father."

But Sir Parke, the subdued and broken old aristocrat, could only weep and lift her up, and hand her over to her mother, who, with a burst of tears, received her in her arms. Estelle sat down between them both, upon the sofa, and wept while she pressed her mother's hand, or stroked her father's cheek, and told them of the long-lost child that she too had recovered. Then Etoile was brought in, and presented to her grandparents, who contemplated her beauty with pride and pleasure.

But at last Lady Morelle said:

"There is another who is waiting to see our Estelle. Come, Sir Parke, take your grandchild in your hand and let us pass into the adjoining room, and give this faithful friend an opportunity to plead his cause."

The baronet arose, and leading Etoile and accompanied by his wife, passed into the back chamber.

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Estelle sank upon the sofa—the beating of her heart was almost audible.

A moment passed and Lord Eagle Tower was in the room and at her side.

What was first said on either side, they could not have told!—how should another? It was a most agitated, tumultuous interview, in which all that either learned at first was, that neither heart was changed toward the other. Lord Eagle Tower learned the meaning of the sacrifice that she had made. And she discovered the supererogatory nature of her long self-immolation.

And finally he said—

"My Estelle! my love! my wife! deemed you that ever *I* could forget *you* and marry? I! Oh, my own! all these years of absence have you only taken root deeper and deeper into my heart! become more and more knitted to my soul! My wife! my innermost self, not now, not to-day only, but always and forever, from eternity to eternity, my own! Oh, suffering one! and did you think that time or absence had power to steal *you* from my heart, or that another could ever fill your place there? Impossible in fact! sacrilegious in theory! No, Estelle; no, dearest wife! my heart's innermost treasury! no. I lived amid a pageantry of beautiful and attractive women, as lovely, perhaps, as my Estelle. But not one among them was mine, or ever could be mine, because my heart was abundantly filled. I moved among them, my eyes enjoying, in common with others, the sight of their beauty and grace, but without the slightest wish to appropriate any among them. I moved amid the beautiful, even as though I had been a happy husband, with his whole heart filled, his whole nature abundantly satisfied with the wife of his choice. For my heart was full of the love of my only possible wife, though her presence lighted another hemisphere."

Draw the vail. The full interview between such hearts

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so deeply tried, so long severed, so unexpectedly reunited, is almost too sacred for description.

But little more remains to be told.

That same afternoon, a messenger, sent to Heathville, brought back the worthy Doctor Goodloe with a special license, and before the set of sun Estelle became Lady Eagle Tower.

They remained a few days at the Headland, during which Lady Eagle Tower applied for, and received, full powers of guardianship over the person and property of her child. It is needless to say that that child was received with paternal affection by Lord Eagle Tower.

In a few days they set sail for Washington, where Lord Eagle Tower received dispatches appointing him to proceed at once to the Court of —— upon certain diplomatic business. He immediately obeyed the order and departed, accompanied by his lady and her whole family. Willful Brande was to visit them there, whenever his professional duties would permit him to do so. Lord Dazzleright renewed his proposition to the beautiful Amazon, but Barbara gratefully and firmly declined the man and the coronet.

* * * * * *

Susan Copsewood married Mr. Gridley, Lord Eagle Tower's "gentleman," and both continue in the service of their former master and mistress. Susan has entirely recovered from her transient fear of ghosts, and is even more incredulous than ever upon the subject of the reappearance of departed spirits; for, in several confidential conversations with her mistress, she discovered that the supposed apparition of the spirit of Blanche Brande, that haunted the old family burial-ground, and peeped in at her window, was no other than her own dear lady, Estelle, who, restless from grief, had nightly left her sleepless couch to spend an hour or two in wandering through the solitary groves

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Years have flown. Lord and Lady Eagle Tower reside in great splendor, surrounded by their interesting family, at the Eastern Court, where he is resident minister. The fate of Luxmore is unknown.

Barbara Brande still sails upon the sea, and promises to leave it only when her brother Willful, who is now a commander in the navy, shall be united to his promised bride—Etoile L'Orient, the lovely Lady of the Isle.

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